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ABSTRACT

The conference proceedings include the opening address, plenary session papers, workshop reports, a final forum and address, and the conference program and participant list. The plenary session papers include: "What Are We Doing in Modern Languages Today?"; "Communicative Skills and the Modern Languages Degree"; "The Place of Spoken Language in the Hierarchy of Language Skills"; "An Analytical Approach to the Teaching of Spoken German"; "Towards a Pedagogic Theory of Interpreting"; "The Ear Has Its Reasons--Interpreting and the Modern Languages Curriculum"; "Language Performance, Context, and the Personality of the Interpreter"; "The Evaluation of Oral/Aural Skills within the BA Finals Examination"; and "Has the Language Laboratory a Place in the Undergraduate Course?" Workshop topics include: modern languages curriculum design; oral/aural versus oral/written exercises; audio and video independent study courses; computer-based independent study and testing; satellite television for Russian and French study; balancing oral and written language; minority languages; exploiting video resources; conference interpreting; word-processing and advanced translation; oral language change; interpreting as a language-learning activity; teaching assistants; spontaneous expression methodology; language laboratories; study abroad; testing; the use of linguists; and field recording of materials. (MSE)

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Oral skills in the modern languages degree

Proceedings of a conference

convened by and held at the

University of Bradford, 3-6 January 1984

Edited by G Doble and B T Griffiths

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Introduction

Professor R B Tilford

University of Bradford

The Nuffield enquiry into language teaching in Higher Education highlights the need to consider carefully the aims and content of courses at degree level. To communicate easily, correctly, appropriately and convincingly in a variety of situations, orally and in writing constitutes an aim of foreign language teaching at all levels which is self-evident to the interested general public and to the student. Rather more recently it appears to have become a priority of governement as well. But is it self-evident to us who teach in universities? If there is confusion,does this not partly result from our ignoring the obvious, and the fact that this ignorance is reflected in our curricula, our personal academic priorities and the traditional pattern of incentives and rewards in university language departments?

It is not, of course, as simple as that. After all, many of us would claim that what is now packaged as 'communicative competence' has long been achieved by generations of students as a by-product of the study of creative literature, assisted by the weekly prose. Other needs of 'communicative comptetence' were amply served by the lecteur and by residence abroad. This was true for some students-including ourselves. But how typical are we of all those who read for a degree in languages? Is the link between the study of great books and 'communicative competence' direct enough to motivate students primarily interested in the latter, let alone efficient enough to satisfy interested parties outside the universities?

We have to face the fact that the increase in numbers of people studying languages and, particularly, the changed backgrounds from which they come make the 'great books' route to communicative competence less attractive and less efficient than it was. Not that the percentage of working-class students of languages has increased appreciably; rather, the cultural habits of the 'new' middle class, our traditional source, have changed.

To put it bluntly, the literary and aesthetic culture, including the reading culture, is not shared by as high a proportion of language students as in the past. This confronts us with the possibility that the creative literature route to communicative competence depended to a considerable extent on preparation in the parental home. This, in a great many cases, no longer exists. If these speculations are correct, the percentage of students who will want and be capable of achieving communicative competence through the 'great books' route is diminishing.

The problem may be alleviated by the lecteur and the year spent abroad, but not by very much. In any case both may not be the fixtures we have taken

them to be. If one adds to that such factors as economic decline, apparently permanent high levels of unemployment and possible changes in currency relationships, it becomes even more necessary for us to offer a systematic, explicit and direct training in a variety of language skills. That would mean a significant shift of emphasis in our work. And if our professional lives as university teachers are to be worth living, it means also that we shall have to discover scholarly excitement in non-literary as well as in literary varieties of language, in a variety of modes of communication and in methods of teaching them.

We shall, too, have to face other pressures: the linking of the advanced study of languages with more 'vocational' subjects. The term 'vocational' begs many questions, but the pressure is unlikely to go away; government will see to that. So will consumer demand. The turning away from languages as an A-Level and university subject appears to be directly related to the widespread perception among pupils that languages do not lead to jobs. To link languages with a wide variety of other subjects is important also from the point of view of student choice and aptitude. We are all familiar with students who, very able practical and academic linguists, have little bent for literary criticism. There are, however, risks in leaning too heavily on vocational justifications. Will students actually opt for 'vocational' courses when job prospects remain so uncertain? May we not, perhaps, be facing a change in the Zeitgeist, towards a full-blown cultural pessimism, bringing with it an actual hostility among the young to the instrumental, the allegedly practically useful? It is fortunate that a large part of the case for more and better language-teaching does not rest solely on vocational considerations.

Whatever languages are linked with-literature, economics, politics, law, management or business studies, engineering or information technology, for example - it is important (a) to establish an increased priority for language study immediately related to communicative competence and (b) to ensure that the study of the foreign language and the other subject are integrated in a formal and systematised - not a random 'only-connect'- sort of way.

Increased priority can be achieved in a number of ways. Language teaching could occupy a bigger slice of student contact hours, language examinations could have a higher weighting. Equally important, senior academic staff should be seen by students to be committed to and personally involved in language teaching - not just in the final year. In particular, it is symbolically important that language teaching is not left to the lecteurs or to native speakers on short-term contracts, or relegated to a 'language centre' with 'service status'. Furthermore, colleagues who devote themselves to language teaching and to investigating methods and curriculum development must see that their work is recognised.

Increased priority, then, entails difficult policy decisions. Of these the integration of language study and the other components of the degree course is probably particularly difficult. I am sceptical whether a 'mixed' degree (for example French and Management, German and Politics, Spanish and Economics) in which the foreign language component is fixed and unchanging

will succeed either in capturing interest or academically. Integration requires that the objectives, content and teaching methods of the language component of the degree be geared to the objectives and content of the other component, and vice-versa. Opportunities are lost if a student following a course in French and Politics does not have the opportunity at an appropriate stage to do a major course in French politics and to specialise, though not exclusively, on varieties of political language in French. Such language work should not be regarded as purely instrumental, providing a tool for the study of the other subject. The linguistic characteristics of many non-literary varieties of French or German, for example, and the relating of these to the functions of language variety and the purpose of texts expressed in particular idioms is an important - seriously under-researched- area of intrinsic scholarly interest for modern linguists. Far more work has been done on English in this respect. We know that translation, given the interest and the appropriate selection of texts, can be much more than many of us make it from the point of view of integration. There is no need to remind ourselves that this activity can, through a contrastive approach, yield systematic insights into each language of the language pair. We might, however, recall that it can do the same for the institutions, politics and society of the countries concerned. As a specialist in German politics and a university-trained linguist teaching translation from first year undergraduate level to post-graduate level, I know that it is possible, through carefully selected texts, to teach certain aspects of German politics more successfully through translation than through the courses in German politics which I give to the same students, even when that course is in German.

The most obvious, but also possibly the most superficial, form of integration is to teach <u>in</u> the foreign language. There is no doubt that it can be done, particularly in the later years of a course, and especially where what one is teaching does not go beyond descriptive information. And we should do it. However, many urge teaching in the foreign language throughout. Here, partly because of my training in the social sciences, I part company with many whose platform I otherwise share, who also wish to make the study of languages in the universities more language-orientated. It is certainly possible to teach in the foreign language without unacceptable loss of understanding and slowing of pace, but we should be aiming at that and more besides. And the 'more besides' may not be capable of being achieved if we do <u>all</u> our teaching and examining in the foreign language. The clear risk is that the valuable contrastive dimension will be undermined. To teach the politics of a foreign country, or its economic institutions or, surely, its literature, to students of modern languages who have no - or very little - formal education in the politics or literature of their own country is to be denied a valuable contrastive/comparative tool. For national - not nationalistic - intellectual traditions and idioms inhabit their mother tongue and the English-language secondary literature. There is some risk of being misunderstood here, of being acused of nationalism or cultural imperialism. Or of selling short the notion that 'scholarship knows no national boundaries'. I am certainly not inferring that one set of national traditions and idioms is superior to another, and that one should teach, at least in part, in the mother tongue for that reason. I am simply suggesting that by teaching only in the foreign language we increase

the risk of students inhabiting exclusively foreign traditions and idioms and thus deprive ourselves of a valuable analytical tool for the study of the foreign country. The ability of the gifted, educated French-speaking Briton to see French society in a way the French cannot do is an important asset for the linguist. Competence in two cultures and the ability to commute between them should be the aim at the university level. To put it more concretely, many aspects of German politics and society which, when studied by Germans, are usually the preserve of lawyers or constitutional lawyers, are, when the British address themselves to them, studied also by historians, political scientists or linguists, and are illumed by them in ways which the Germans seem not to do. An example of such an aspect is the distinctive mix of law and politics in German society. De Tocqueville and Lord Bryce on America are, of course, distinguished examples of what I mean.

Does this, then, mean that one does not teach French Literature in French or German politics in German? No, but compromise is necessary, a compromise which will necessarily assume a different shape in different courses. My own preference is to teach at least the first year in English and to divide the final year between English and the foreign language. The second year is a matter for the lecturer's discretion, depending on the linguistic attainment and progress of the group.

I doubt whether a renewed emphasis on language teaching is appropriate at the university level if it is to consist solely of instruction in practical language skills, important though these are. If it is to be academically valuable, it will probably have to be linked with systematic analysis of the contemporary language against the background of a course in linguistics, of which the most influential component might well be sociolinguistics, given the direction that many courses are taking. On the face of it foreign-language teaching and linguistics should fit together very easily; as some of us have learned painfully, they often do not. It is clearly a question of continuing to talk to colleagues in linguistics and of persuading them of the emphases required in a linguistics course for students of foreign languages.

If practical language skills and the study of the contemporary foreign language generally have had low priority with many of us, how much more true is it of oral skills and the study of the spoken language? That a case should have to be made at all for an emphasis on oral-aural skills and on spoken language is not without irony. But the case for rigorous instruction in such skills is more complex, and more important, than is often assumed. To communicate orally with confidence and ease in a variety of situations has always been thought by 'outsiders' to be a prime, self-evident purpose of foreign-language education at degree level. That such a purpose is not novel, brash, superficial or incompatible with the grander purposes of university education, but intimately linked with something of impeccable pedigree, namely rhetoric, should not really need stressing. Yet it does.

Pleasure, versatility and skill in manipulating the spoken word in foreign and mother tongues have a manifold contribution to make to the intellectual, social, aesthetic and emotional development of the individual. Vocationally,

too, the case for rigorous instruction in oral skills is strong. Many of us know that when we have reached a certain level of managerial responsibility, whatever our career, our efficiency or success in many situations depends on our resourcefulness in manipulating (in a nutral sense!) the spoken word. Reporting, summarizing, speaking to notes, presenting a brief are at once important oral and intellectual skills. If students of languages are not to be proficient at these skills, who is?

But why, then, do we tend in our universities to neglect oral skills, leaving them to chance or tacking them apologetically on to the curriculum in an unintegrated way? Is it because in oral skills too much depends on personality, and we can't change that? Or because students acquire oral confidence anyway, in time? Such answers amount to an evasion of our responsibility. Oral skills constitute a vital part of the equipment of most people's professional lives and must be taught systematically, to the linguist above all. Unless objectives are identified for oral and written skills, the relationship between them established and their integration into the curriculum assured, little is likely to be achieved. Furthermore, the learning of oral skills and strategies must, to be academically rewarding, be accompanied by the formal analysis of the linguistic characteristics, phonological, syntactic and lexical of varieties of spoken language. This involves the scholarly upgrading of spoken language and a refusal to regard it as a poor linguistic and academic relation.

Renewed emphasis on oral-aural skills at the university level has stimulated the search for new language-teaching methods - the interest in interpreting as an advanced language-teaching technique is a notable development. New aids are arriving so quickly that we risk being overrun by them. In the past how to employ the language laboratory has occasioned much soul-searching, and the problem is by no means solved. Now the conference interpreting laboratory, video, satellite television are upon us. All have enormous potential, especially the visual media. Do we modern linguists really need the cultural anthropologists and sociolinguists to remind us of the importance for successful communication of seeing the spoken word? Not surprising, then, that language-teaching technology will play a large part in our planning.

The series of January annual conferences on language teaching in the universities is well under way. 'Oral-Aural Skills in the Modern Languages Degree' started the series in Bradford (1984), 'Interpreting in the Modern Languages Degree' followed at Salford (1985). 'Translating in the Modern Languages Degree' will be held at Heriot-Watt (1986) and further conferences in the series are planned.

Preface

When the conference whose proceedings are published here was first planned we did not know that a major national debate on foreign language teaching at all levels was about to begin. The conference was to mark the retirement of the first Director of the Modern Languages Centre at Bradford, Professor Frank Willis, and the Centre's move into new accommodation. The choice of theme 'Oral and Aural Skills in the Modern Languages Degree' was to reflect Frank Willis's interests and Bradford's reputation. As things turned out the timing was excellent, and it is hoped that these Proceedings will illumine and enliven the debate on the purposes, content and methods of the study of modern languages.

How modern is the modern languages degree? Is it a fact that today's graduates are much more capable of communicating in a foreign language than were their predecessors of twenty years ago? Is it true that philology, literature and the written word are still firmly established as the real and the only respectable substance of language study at most universities in the mid-eighties, or has the pre-eminence of literature at last been effectively challenged?

The conference reported upon in this volume has served not only to air these questions and many others, but also to show that some of the received wisdom of recent years is itself being challenged. There has, for example, been a widely-held belief that modern languages departments in higher education could be regarded as either 'traditional' or 'progressive', the gauge of modernity being the institution's willingness to shift the emphasis away from literature towards area studies and practical language. It also used to be thought that a handful of the newer universities were the only ones to have introduced communication-orientated practical language activities into the modern languages degree. But as speakers and delegates at the conference worked their way through the programme of plenary sessions, demonstrations, workshops and meetings, it emerged that something like two-thirds of the 34 universities and 14 polytechnics represented there were experimenting with or had actually adopted 'advanced' or 'applied' language activities such as oral summary, aural-written and written-oral exercises.

As Alan Hornsey of the University of London Institute of Education pointed out in his address at the final forum, 'It is time we recognised that the familiar dichotomy is an over-simplification. Such a strict polarisation between old and new approaches just does not exist. It's not a choice between no oral and all oral. What we have, and what the conference is revealing, is a continuum, a range of mixtures, a merging of approaches.'

The variety of these approaches was itself revealing, and even more surprising was the common thread which started to appear as several speakers and contributors sought to dispel what they regarded as a widespread illusion - namely the belief that these practical activities, exercises and examinations were there primarily because of their obvious

vocational relevance. Not so, the conference participants were assured: although the appeal of these 'useful skills' is indeed very real, their usefulness should be regarded more as a bonus, as their real justification is the contribution they make to the undergraduate's all-round language development, especially when such activities are integrated into or are made to complement other aspects of the syllabus, such as economics, literature, politics, business studies, area studies or preparation for the year abroad.

These questions and, of course, many others were examined at the plenary sessions and during the numerous demonstrations and workshops. The word-processor and several computer-assisted-learning packages were demonstrated to appreciative groups, while television received live from Moscow and Paris by satellite aroused considerable interest. The 24 workshops were well attended and covered a wide range of topics, including the balance between oral and written work, human and material resources, aural-oral exercises, laboratories for advanced teaching, techniques for making field recordings for language programmes, interpreting as a language-learning activity, and the language skills and personal qualities sought by employers of graduates.

As the papers and reports reveal, there is a healthy diversity of approaches to the teaching of oral skills in the mid-80's. Within this diversity there is also a widespread belief in the relevance of **language in use**, and since the time in the mid-60's when these communicative currents first made their way into the curriculum the modern languages degree may be said to have undergone a sea-change. The many contributions, both prepared and spontaneous, made to the curriculum debate by participants in the conference have served to give the measure of the pace and the scale of this change. That so much can have been achieved in less than two decades says much for the vision and the energy of those in higher education who, such a short time ago, opened a door in modern language teaching and learning.

One measure of a conference is the action it prompts. This one was succeeded by 'Interpreting as an Advanced Language-Teaching Technique' at the University of Salford in January 1985, the Proceedings of which are also published by CILT. To follow are 'Translation in the Modern Languages Degree' at Heriot-Watt in January 1986 and 'Written Skills in the Modern Languages Degree' at Aston in January 1987.

Opening address

R H BIRD CBE

Department of Education and Science

I am delighted to be here this evening. My credentials for being here are for others to judge, and although most of you are no doubt suspending judgment until I have spoken, I hope that the pleasant atmosphere of the evening will lead you not to judge too harshly.

I am the more hesitant because I speak just before work starts on the very comprehensive study of modern language teaching in higher and further education which the Nuffield Foundation has funded. I happen to think that this undertaking is in particularly good hands. I imagine many of you will want to contribute to the study, and indeed I suspect some of you have written in already; I understand that all this is welcome. I feel sure too that you will be awaiting with interest, as I shall, its findings.

I have some idea of my audience tonight. What I know leads me to fear that some of what I want to say, if it deserves attention all, is really for attention by others. Interest in modern languages competence and teaching cannot be confined to those who seek to advance this cause within higher education. This is of course why I have adopted for my address a rather wider title than that of the conference itself.

None of those here are going to need to hear my opening message: which is that learning foreign languages is necessary, useful and rewarding. Less necessary, it is true, if one's native language is English. Which of us has not been impressed at the foreign language command of some modestly employed Scandinavian or Strasbourgeois (I am not even sure why I name these two origins), going beyond competence in supplying what a customer has ordered? Rather few in this country sense the same pressure: an obvious poll is continuously provided in the attitudes of many, indeed most parents, to the presence of modern languages in the secondary school curriculum.

I shall come back to the schools, but in the best traditions (I think) I want to start with the question, why bother? What do we miss by our relative unconcern with modern language learning, by our relative incompetence in the command and use of languages?

At the level of personal reward, there is not one of us here, I suppose, but would feel impoverished if unable to speak and understand the languages he knows; and most of us are confident of the advantages of knowing better the languages we know already and of mastering others. I need not go on to list the numerous ways in which the benefits flow. But many know nothing of these benefits, although with the right introduction to the possibilities and

with the right help they could achieve much more than they may suppose. And that would be true at the age of 13 or 33 or 63.

A stronger appeal to some potential students might be expected of course to lie in the vocational usefulness of linguistic competence. But this takes us straight to the "employer", because after all most individuals in employment are not self-employed. To talk of "the employer" oversimplifies hugely; but certainly we may ask how many businesses have no occasion or potential occasion for transactions in foreign languages, whether buying or selling? Some there undoubtedly are; and even in the hotel and catering trade, which perhaps by its nature has more clients than almost any other, there may be little expectation amongst those clients of any command of any other language than English. (Whereas a Finn or an Arab may hope or expect to be able to travel in Italy or Greece using English as a lingua-franca.) However, let the denizens of even that trade be in no doubt how much customer satisfaction could rise, albeit somewhat randomly distributed, if they extended their foreign language command.

When one turns to those who sell abroad, whether manufactures or services, there is no shortage of quotations pointing to the inadequacy of their staff having no competence except in English. I will give you just one from the now-four-years-old British Overseas Trade Board Report, this from Rome:

> "A British firm whose produce does not speak for itself and needs explaining is very unlikely to get any business as a result of letters written in English. If a product looks promising the Italians will make the necessary language adjustments, but somehow or other the potential buyer has got to be persuaded to take an interest."

Italians or others will come here speaking English, offering to sell things to us: we can buy readily enough in our own language; we must sell in theirs. But surely, some people will say, the necessary competence can be acquired as and when needed; and why indeed take the trouble early in life to learn the familar foreign languages when the professional need later in life may well be for Japanese or Arabic or something rarer than these? No one here, however, will doubt the advantage of the early start, and of the habits and skill in language learning which once mastered is always available as a foundation for building later as the individual may wish.

How early in life, then, and how much? The negative impact of the English language's dominance is as marked on the provision made in schools as at any point in society. The pressures on the school curriculum are always considerable. There are those who can and will demonstrate a need for greater attention to mathematics, to a command of one's own language, to science, to religion or ethics, to economics or civics; and then there are environmental studies, road safety, multi-ethnicity... Influences on the pattern of the curriculum are manifold in this country; Central Government being but one of these, although the Department has unapologetically moved nearer centre-stage over recent years. In the position DES now occupies we have been addressing, amongst other things, the proper place and treatment

of modern language provision in the schools. Since we are in the middle still of this consultative exercise it is a little uncertain what we shall finally say, or with just how much authority the Secretary of State will seek to invest it. On the negative side, we shall probably continue to talk in terms of "most pupils" rather than all; and we shall not suggest that a start on structured foreign language learning should be made at the primary stage. There are reasons for both these reservations.

In secondary schooling I would myself - and here I have to speak purely personally - I would hope that we might go for the inclusion in each pupil's time-table of at least one modern language over a 5-year span (this would be within the broad framework which we have been increasingly promoting, and which has, as one characteristic, strict avoidance of too-early specialisation). This arrangement would by definition constitute some attempt to tackle the unfortunate reluctance to study modern languages, which some say is becoming more marked, amongst boys. There is no sense in which foreign language skills are appropriate for the female half of the population only, and we must all want them more evenly as well as better spread. I said a moment ago "at least one modern language": with some regret I have to say that I hardly expect that for the majority there will be more than one language; but, if the teaching of that one is well done, the essential achievements should be possible.

Let us be in no doubt, however, that the appropriate objectives will be different according to pupils' different capabilities. The precise expectations to be adopted for those attempting a public examination in a modern language at 16+ are currently the subject of exchanges between Education Ministers, the Secondary Examinations Council and representatives of the GCE and CSE Examination Boards; and within the range of ability represented today by CSE and O-Level together there is discussion of some differentiation. The challenge becomes distinctly greater when the market is widened beyond this: many teachers in schools are of course responding to this challenge now, but there is doubtless scope for the development and wider adoption of good approaches to the teaching of those less able at languages. There seems little doubt that the keynote here should, once more, be on oral and aural skills, built up with reference to the practical world to which many youngsters best relate.

An unfortunate feature of school provision in this country is generally considered to be the outstanding strength of French as against all other languages. The competitors presumably are Spanish and German, not, except in isolated cases, immigrant-community languages such as Gujerati and Punjabi. All of us, I think, keep saying that it would be healthier if Spanish or German were more often the first foreign language in a school. This has indeed come across extensively in the DES consultation process, but I want to take, again speaking personally, a querying stance. But, if the main aim of exposure at this age to a foreign language is the acquisition of learning skills, does this concentration matter? It is not as though a scatter of different foreign languages really offered individual pupils a choice of which language they could learn: brave things are sometimes said about movement between

schools for different subjects, but what can be sustained in actuality may be pretty limited. And different practices across schools can of course make transfers between schools more disruptive. So, with regrets, especially as someone who likes French as a language less than some others, I am not very sure about this complaint. I would give more attention, I think, to the wider availability for more pupils of a second foreign language, and hope that no one is lost to language learning because faced first with French.

Now assuming we manage some build-up in language provision and in the extent of language learning up to age 16, what is to happen next between 16 and 18 - I am concerned effectively with those who stay on then in education full-time. Here we come head-on against specialisation, whether in the form of A-Levels or of vocational qualifications. It is possible certainly to take a foreign language A-Level even if one's main thrust of study is towards what are loosely called "the sciences"; more manageable as things are is likely to be an "AO" taken in the first year of the 2-year A-Level course. What might truly exercise strong influence towards language study by that group of students would come from I-Levels if these are introduced under this or some other name. Indeed, foreign language study might be the main beneficiary of that approach.

Most students in higher education will no doubt always arrive via the A-Level route. But some certainly could arrive with Business and Technician Council qualifications: acceptance of these is growing encouragingly. Such qualifications are naturally designed, and the related courses are taught, with vocational objectives in view: so the validating bodies inevitably work rather rigorously through an analysis of what subjects should be mixed and in what proportions to yield a balanced "grouped" programme of study. However, from the point of view of advancing the cause of foreign language learning, the upshot so far is perhaps rather encouraging: you should be familiar, I think, with BTEC Circular No 3 of last August "Modern Languages in Technician Programmes". And my understanding is that there has been generally a strengthening of the foreign language component in business studies courses.

Looking more widely across the vocational field, there is undoubtedly much endeavoir worthy of recognition and praise. Without any attempt at comprehensiveness, let me mention the work of the Institute of Linguists, of the RSA, and of the London Chamber of Commerce. I am told that the Foreign Languages at Work Scheme, certificated by the last named and the British Overseas Trade Board has got off to an encouraging start on a modest budget and bids fair to provide practical language teaching for some who would otherwise drop languages at age 16.

All the types of provision I have just been mentioning will, I think, include an approach to language teaching which emphasises practical competence and oral command, with attention to modern idiom. With some A-Level syllabuses this is, as you know, much less sure. Here, as more widely, A-Level arrangements reflect the attitude and practice of certain universities, and these on the whole are universities whose orientation is quite strongly

towards literary scholarship. I am told there is some change afoot, in the direction of greater concern with oral skills and fluency, and some recognition of language-related learning besides literature; but my impression is fairly clear that this is still less than is needed.

Within higher education the academic staff in each institution has of course a choice in the orientation of the language programmes. I do not stand here with any monolithic message that literary studies should be generally displaced by studies of the economic, political and social systems in one or more countries which use the language in question. With the usual proviso that prospective students need good information about what they are letting themselves in for, and good guidance towards their choices: with that proviso I am sure there is room for both, and no doubt for combinations of the two emphases. But I have no hesitation in singing the theme song of this conference, that part of the task of language activity in HE must be the achievement of a high level of skill in oral communication. It is really regrettable that any one ever appeared to denigrate the importance of this capability, let alone to set it aside as some distraction perhaps from the intellectual rigour which should inform all higher education study.

However, you will be in no doubt that the job is one to be done well and to a high standard at all stages. An element in ensuring quality will be held by many to be the spending of a year abroad; and here once again attention must be paid to the way this activity is conducted and to the involvement of the responsible staff in preparation, monitoring and supervision. Everyone recognises, I am sure, the load which all this imposes on staff, especially as placements abroad have become harder to obtain for the number of students needing them. But you will not, I am convinced, let policy be driven by whatever is easily practicable.

I have referred here to something well established which is at risk of being lost. There is surely much, on the other hand, which demands to be added to the range of what was once provided. Great strides have been made with the development of ab initio teaching, where one of the languages in a degree course is being started from scratch. This is, I am assured, carried out to a standard which creates the possibility of an honours degree in two foreign languages still within three years on-campus. Mid-career programmes have come to be more widely offered by many polytechnics and universities - though not by all, and I am not suggesting that all of them should come into this market-place. But I do want to dwell here for a moment, and to ask whether the skills and often excellent facilities for language teaching in our higher education institutions are being put to as full and good use for this purpose as they might be. The follow-through from the grounding in language learning which we would all like to see will desirably be, for many individuals, the achievement later in life of greater confidence and knowledge of a language already tackled or the acquisition of one or more other languages. Not all who might gain from this will necessarily realise it without a selling effort by those who could provide the service; not all firms will see as clearly as they should on their own that an investment in language education for some of their staff would pay off. And by language education I mean of

course oral and aural skills, but also a sufficient awareness of the culture and traditions of the country to be able to use the language effectively in its context. This range of learning is something that can probably be better provided through broadly-based language courses in universities and colleges than in many private language schools.

Could you do more of this, then, could you in fact sell your services more than you do to the advantage partly of your own enterprise? This is the question posed right across the range of higher and further education activity by the Department's PICKUP Programme, a smaller programme than ideally we would like, alas, but having some capacity nonetheless to give a little assistance to those who do want to expand the continuing education which they make available to those in employment. With or without PICKUP, and even if you can't make a "profit" on the activity, I hope quite fervently that we shall see a steady real increase in mid-career language provision.

One question I would like to throw at you, if I may. It is just this. Whether your language course incorporates literary or area studies, do you sufficiently teach and examine **in the language**? Perhaps some of you do that wholly, or at least move towards doing it substantially as students' language proficiency progresses. I recognise of course that you may need to conduct written examinations and that an emphasis on oral skills does not entrain the development of proficiency in writing. But on the other hand, no one could deny both the real value of such action and its "signal" value in relation to the schools. The influence on the schools of HE practice, and not solely through the GCE exam system, is undeniably great: it would be good, would it not, to persuade the schools to work more than is common now in the medium of the language being taught?

I want to say something too about what may sometimes be styled "service teaching". If it be true that foreign language competence is of wide value, of value to students following many different specialisms, then we must all hope that during their studies engineers, scientists, historians and so on may have opportunity for language study. Ideally, I think, we are addressing here not a mere general conversational grasp of a language. Rather, the learning on offer must be of a type, most obviously in the vocabulary and idiom acquired, which appears fully relevant to the student in his own specialism. "Integration" is perhaps the watch-word; and an approach to this requires of course positive collaboration between staff of the departments concerned, and for the language department inescapably the development of specialised provision. Nevertheless, the rewards from this endeavour could be considerable, the more so if the mix of student population is going to move increasingly toward "the sciences". Although the final extent of this movement is not sure, both because the central authorities are in mid-stream, as it were, on the policy, and because the future pattern of student demand cannot be known: it is, as you know, Government policy for this shift to happen. So you may in future find more of your market in departments outside your own.

I have managed, you may have noticed, up until this last moment, to speak to

you without saying much about what the government has done or may be intending to do (though I got in my small plug for PICKUP). But, you may be saying to yourselves, what about all the hindrance to your efforts for which the Government can be held responsible? The Government has after all taken money out of the system on a substantial scale and is still insisting on further savings; and this is true of all sectors of HE, though at this level of aggregation the treatment of the sectors, and the timing, have not been identical. But of course from the stand-point of academic staff, necessarily within a department of an institution, it is the situation of that department which counts: and I suspect the differences between departments are fairly particular, rather than concerning all language departments in universities versus those in polytechnics or in IHEs. Reverting to generalities, however, I feel certain that you have almost all encountered pressure, and are continuously under pressure, to achieve higher productivity. I do not think - and I hardly suppose you think -that this pressure is going to diminish.

This is the note of asperity which I do have to sound this evening: money will go on being scarce, and you will have to strive all you can to do as much as possible with what you get. I hope, I can say no more than that, that the treatment of all institutions can and will be such as to avoid serious inefficiencies and disruption which occur when funds are suddenly cut, with consequences in randomly distributed unfilled vacancies and unstructured cut-backs in capital and other programmes. Some of these effects have been seen recently, and lessons have hopefully been learnt. Even so, life will not be spacious.

Now I have no credentials for telling any of you how to do your job. I have naturally seen expressions of belief about what is the maximum tolerable student:staff ratio for teaching purposes in your subject area. You should perhaps, especially Heads of Department, be putting questions of this character and indeed answering them. I suppose that the answer could well be affected by the level and type of equipment you enjoy: very well, then you need surely to cast around for wisdom on the usability of different types of equipment with different types of students; perhaps to experiment yourselves, adopting different teaching strategies until you find what are the best combinations of approach.

But, in some cases, how to obtain new equipment at all? No one is making any bones about these being hard times, and there is much competition for funds. If additions to departmental budgets are simply not on offer - if, worse, you face cuts - you will rightly agonise over choices, over whether there is after all some saving you can make on current outlays which will allow you to equip yourselves better, and so not merely do a better job but perhaps save on current spending thereafter. You will no doubt, having done these sums, point to the productivity gains you can realise and plead once more for new money. If this fails, and I would say in any case, you should address yourselves to the possibilities of earning money on terms which yield you a profit. The provision to employers of carefully costed and priced services should not only count as virtuous, but could help in the financing of better equipment. Possession of better equipment could in turn permit the development of more effective and cost-effective teaching strategies.

I do not want to exaggerate, nor to suggest that commercial services should become, for most of you, more than a modest part of your total endeavour. I do urge you, though, to leave no stones of this kind unturned. I do urge you generally to be always just that little bit critical of what you are doing, to take note of developments which others are pioneering and promoting and to keep you business moving forward. Change needs in general to be incremental, not revolutionary; nor do I see reason for urging that you consider violent departures from what you have already built up. But requirements do alter; there are surely some unmet challenges which you recognise; and perhaps I have added a little to what you may want to think about.

I hope so. Thank you for listening.

Part one

THE PLENARY SESSIONS

WHAT ARE WE DOING IN MODERN LANGUAGES TODAY?

Anthony Lodge

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As a medievalist I always feel rather abashed when asked to give my views on teaching the modern French language. This feeling becomes acute in giving the opening paper at a conference at Bradford University, an institution which enjoys such a high reputation in this very field. With all the work currently being done in applied linguistics, much of it, it must be said, in the area of English studies, I fear that my contribution will only be second-hand and derivative.

Having said that, personal experience has shown me that new thinking on language and language-teaching, although widely current in applied linguistics circles, is far from commonplace in traditional British university French departments. I hope, therefore, that my remarks, derivative as they may be, will not be too hors de propos.

This talk divides itself into two parts:

a. the present situation regarding the teaching of oral/aural skills in the universities;
b. possible ways forward.

A. THE PRESENT SITUATION

In assessing the present situation regarding the teaching of oral/aural skills in French, let me begin by drawing on the results of a survey I conducted last summer in all British and Irish French departments on teaching and examining French language at final Honours level. This survey was sponsored by SUFLRA[1] and financed by Nuffield. Fifty institutions were approached and thirty-nine sent back replies. I have not yet processed the results into publishable form, but it would not be out of order to anticipate publication by announcing those of the results which concern the teaching and examining of oral/aural skills.

A rapid perusal of replies to the Nuffield survey indicated that the teaching and examining of oral skills in many British universities are running into increasing difficulties. There are outstanding exceptions where departments have seized the problem by the horns and are coming up with interesting solutions. In the majority of universities, however, (ie the traditional ones), oral French is still handled in the way it was twenty to thirty years ago, despite increasingly loud external voices clamouring for change. In one distinguished university oral French is still only an optional part of the degree.

The extent of the conservatism with regard to oral French becomes clear when you look at the answers to questions 31-41 in our questionnaire - Assessment in the final examination:

37 How are written skills assessed?
Almost all universities replied that assessment involved usually three language papers of three hours each.

34 How are oral skills assessed?
Three-quarters of the universities replied that the sole method of assessment was an interview with 1-2 examiners, lasting on average twenty minutes.

Universities are clearly very interested in examining **written** skills. They seem to allot somewhat less attention to the examination of **oral** skills.

This reticence with regard to oral activities becomes even clearer when one looks at replies to questions 20-30 on teaching methods employed in finals year.

28 How many marked written assignments does the student carry out during the year?
In most cases the answer lay between 15-20.

24 How many marked oral assignments does the student perform during the year?
In most cases the answer was **none**.

22 Do members of the full-time staff engage directly and explicitly in the teaching of oral/aural French at this level?
60% of departments actually answered no to this question.

Oral French is seen as something the students acquire during their year abroad (DIY school). Our role is merely to provide them with conversational practice through the lecteurs.

Many of us would dispute this naïve equation of oral French with 'conversation'. However, the question of the lecteurs again shows up the strong prejudice in traditional French departments in favour of the written at the expense of the oral:

1. Our lecteurs are in most cases, young, temporary and entirely untrained in teaching French as a foreign language. (My own experience as an **assistant** showed me very clearly how inadequate I was as a teacher of my own language.) We recognise their lack of expertise by keeping them well away from teaching **written** French, but we deem them fully capable of teaching the complexities of **oral** French often with the minimum of supervision.

2. At the time of the 1981 UGC cuts which area of staffing in French departments proved to be the most vulnerable? I can

quote at least three universities (including my own) where this was the native-speaker assistants.

It seems to me clear, then, from the replies to our survey, that in many universities the teaching of oral French is still very much the poor relation. There are strong pressures upon us to change this. The most immediate in my experience come from students themselves. Less immediate, but becoming more so, are utilitarian, vocational pressures from a government anxious for some at least of our universities to be producing marketable commodities rather than educated human beings.

I am not myself overly impressed by the vocational argument. But this does not mean that I endorse the conservative attitudes to the teaching of oral French. Quite the reverse. The question which I would raise on oral French teaching in the traditional universities is not an economic, utilitarian one, it is an intellectual one concerning the philosophy of language current in our French departments.

The way we teach a language inevitably reflects the theoretical model of that language that we carry around in our heads. We cannot talk about language except with reference to our personal model of what the phenomenon is. For the vast majority of us, this model may be implicit rather than explicit, but we will still have a model. The time has come in French departments when we need to look at the model of languages we are working from and ask ourselves how well it stands up to rigorous analysis.

Thinking about language has altered dramatically over the last half-century. The traditional model of language inherited from the Middle Ages has been largely superseded among specialist linguists. How much of a grip does it still have on present-day British French departments? How far have we succeeded in adjusting traditional thinking to bring it into line with the soundly based findings of linguistic research?

The traditional model

Let us outline briefly the chief characteristics of the traditional model of language. This may help us to see to what extent different teachers of French in different institutions cling to or depart from its tenets.

An initial observation which must be made is that this traditional model is medieval in origin and derives essentially from medieval and Renaissance attitudes to Latin. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance Latin was the key to literacy and education. Latin was therefore considered the only real language, language par excellence. Latin was used throughout Western Europe not so much as the language of speech as the universal language of reading and writing.

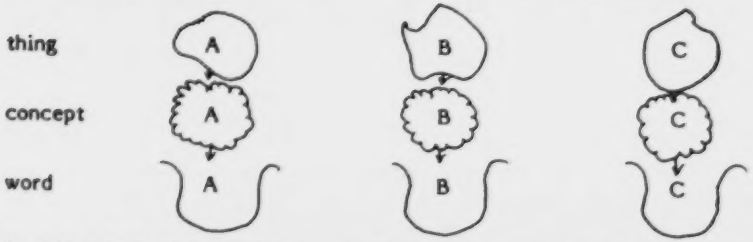
When the vernaculars, like English and French, acquired a prestige of their

own in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, a prime concern of contemporary scholars was to present their vernacular as a worthy inheritor of Latin, ie, as a fixed, standardized written language. Variation in the vernacular was to be combated and the ephemerality of speech almost completely ignored (as in medieval Latin).

The traditional model of language still trundles along this waggon-load of ideas inherited ultimately from medieval Latin.

Before pursuing our analysis of the traditional model further, it might be helpful to invoke Saussure's distinction between **internal** and **external** features of a language. The **internal** features of a language are the inner semantic and grammatical structures which enable it to function as a communication code. The **external** features of a language are the relations holding between the language and the people who use it - the geographical area over which the language is spoken, variation in the language according to geography, social class, etc, the notion of the linguistic norm in the community.

How does the traditional model handle the **internal** elements in a language: semantics and grammar? On the question of meaning the traditional approach is generally referential and ultimately platonic in inspiration:



In this world of pre-existing wordless concepts, language plays a purely marginal role: it merely provides phonetic bottles into which wordless concepts are poured. Concepts are 'essential' and are anchored to an objectively definable 'real world'; words (language) are 'accidental' and of secondary importance.

In this model then language belongs not in the centre of human experience but on the periphery: an outer shell of form around an inner core of content. (This attitude is far from dead in traditional French departments where linguists are often branded as pedants or mere technicians foolishly scrutinizing the dinner-plate instead of getting on with the meal.)

In the traditional model, the approach to semantics is essentially referential and atomistic, ie words derive their meaning from their reference to things outside language. The idea that words derive their value from each other and

that language and convention to a great extent condition our perception of the world is severely played down.

In traditional French courses this view of meaning is still alive and kicking. The exploration of French lexical and semantic structures finds little place in courses geared largely to finding English translation equivalents.

On the question of grammar, the traditional approach generally works within a framework of ideas again largely derived from medieval Latin. The categories of traditional grammar are by and large those produced by the medieval Latin grammarians and transposed at the time of the Renaissance into the first tentative descriptions of the vernacular languages. Under this system distributional and syntactic features have only a small role to play - appropriate enough when dealing with an inflecting language like Latin, with its complex morphology, but less so when handling the more analytical structures of French. Grammar, fortunately, is a much more exciting subject than a mere rehash of these traditional dogmas.

However, a major difficulty with traditional grammar is the ambiguity inherent in the word 'grammar' itself. Traditionally 'grammar' (and 'rules') are associated closely with the notion of correctness. Traditional grammar is concerned primarily with measuring up linguistic behaviour against some artificial standard or conventional norm:

traditional grammar ⟶ règles ⟶ norme

However, also implicit in the words 'grammar' and 'rule' is the notion of 'pattern', of 'regularity', of 'system':

descriptive grammar ⟶ lois ⟶ système

Traditional grammar blurs the distinction between these two types of rule, the one prescriptive (règles) and the other descriptive (lois). Indeed, it often naïvely assumes that the règles are the lois.

This introduces us to the second area of the traditional model of language -its treatment of the external features of language. How does the traditional model handle the external features of language: the relationship between language and society? Here we are dealing essentially with the problem of language variation (sociolinguistics and stylistics). What strikes me about the traditional approach to this question is that it is fundamentally evaluative and prescriptive. The object of traditional grammar is to arrange competing varieties in a hierarchy of prestige:

The quintessential form of the French language is the literary standard set by the bons auteurs and enshrined in the traditional of bon usage. This variety is deemed the only one worthy of study and is somehow regarded as appropriate to all circumstances of language use. This is a monolithic, static view of language which regards French as an artefact rather than as a flexible instrument.

Deviation from the norms of bon usage is castigated not on the basis of break-down of communication but on the basis of social stigmatisation. Certain errors have become shibboleths - past historic, imperfect subjunctive, past participle agreement. They have great importance not because they greatly affect meaning, but because they signal inadequate education, inability to learn and apply rules.

Then, there is the vexed problem of speech and writing. In the traditional model derived from Latin the written form is endowed with infinitely higher prestige than the spoken. 'Speech is less grammatical than writing'. In the days when writing was the only means of recording language, it is understandable that the written language should have provided the main focus of attention for grammarians. During the twentieth century a vast array of alternative techniques have been devised for recording language. The analysis of speech no longer presents us with the same technical problems, ie we no longer have any excuse for not equipping ourselves with the appropriate analytical tools to talk about it sensibly.

For the linguist 'all varieties of language, written or spoken, are equally valid as **communication**, provided they are used for the **appropriate purpose** and in the **appropriate situation**'. But these notions of **communication**, **purpose**, **situation** are systematically avoided in the traditional model of language. Language is not there seen as an adaptable instrument for communication, it is a monolithic artefact suceptible not to variation, but to corruption. The written form is infinitely superior to the spoken, for what matters is not appropriateness, but correctness.

What inferences can we draw from this rapid gallop through traditional ideas on language? As I have been suggesting, many of the assumptions on which they are based have long been discarded by linguists. Can the same be said of our French departments? The impressions gleaned from the Nuffield survey and from elsewhere suggest that the traditional model is still holding its own.

French studies in Britain since the war (unlike English studies) has not really succeeded, in my view, in assimilating in a substantial way the ideas generated by post-Saussurian linguistics. Philology has been virtually ousted from our syllabuses, but 'modern linguistics' has been marginalised in the hands of a tiny number of specialists - often pejoratively referred to as 'linguisticians' - or hived off into specialist linguistic departments.

In other words, French studies is allowing a gap to develop between its claim to be at the forefront of knowledge and academic research and the reality of its own often rather shaky ideas on language.

I am not suggesting here that French departments should be constantly adjusting their courses to the rapid fluctuations in transatlantic fashion on such recondite issues as case-grammar and trace-theory. It must be admitted, moreover, that much of the linguistic research of recent years has been of little relevance to French departments. The retreat among certain linguists from natural language into logico-mathematical speculations has not been as fruitful as some would have wished.

However, this cannot be used as an excuse by modern language departments for not absorbing and applying basic ideas on language which have long been taken as axiomatic by linguists. We could do worse than look at a recent article by R A Hudson which lists 83 fundamental points upon which virtually all linguists agree.[2] If modern languages in Britain are to prosper they must ensure that their approach to language is anchored to a sounder theoretical base than has hitherto been the case.

B. SIGNS OF INNOVATION

For various reasons which it is not all that easy to grasp, the Scottish universities have been more ready to innovate in language matters than many of the traditional English ones. As long ago as 1975 the eight Scottish universities joined forces to produce a new first-year university course book. This was published in 1979 under the title Le Français en faculté and is widely used.[3] More recently the Scots have again been working together under the aegis of SUFLRA to produce material based on communicative principles. A second-year course entitled Lyon à la une is being developed in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling. Final year courses are being tried out in Dundee, St Andrews and Aberdeen. Not all the ideas currently being peddled in Scotland are sure of a future; that is the nature of experimentation, but at least there are serious attempts being made to put language teaching on a new, sounder and more exciting footing. Let me tell you about my experience in Aberdeen.

For the past four years a team of seven of us in Aberdeen have been developing what for us is a new approach to French language teaching at Honours level. We have called the course we are developing Travaux pratiques. It arose out of a request from students for language-work which presented a wider and more realistic range of problems than those raised by the traditional language classes. No-one wanted to do away with the prose, but there was widespread agreement that something additional should be done to meet the students' request particularly in the area of oral work. In what direction should we proceed? We decided that we could supplement the prose with a venture into teaching language as 'communication' - an objective long since striven for by teachers of English as a foreign language.

What do we mean by communicative language teaching?

The two linguists who have had a seminal influence on communicative approaches to language have been Dell Hymes in the USA and M Halliday in the UK. It was Dell Hymes who coined the term 'communicative

competence'.[4] He was worried by the abstraction and artificiality of Chomsky's approach to language which laid emphasis on revealing the 'grammatical competence' of the 'ideal speaker-listener in a homogeneous speech community'. Hymes and fellow sociolinguists found this view of language to be quite unworkable for their purposes.

For linguists concerned less with logico-mathematical speculation than with the social facts of language, variation in a natural language is not something pathological and anomalous, but utterly normal. A natural language cannot be reduced to a monolithic entity: it is essentially an amalgam of a multiplicity of varieties, a complex interplay of numerous variables:

a. variation according to user (dialect)
   - geography
   - social class
   - age
   - sex

b. variation according to use (register)
   - mode (speech/writing)
   - tenor (degree of formality)
   - domain (communicative function)

The sociolinguist regards all attempts to hierarchise different varieties within a language as entirely artificial. He takes a descriptive look at language rather than a prescriptive one. He is concerned with uncovering the lois rather than with expounding règles. In particular, the assumption that writing is in any way 'superior' to speech is about as preposterous as to suggest that a lorry is an inherently better mode of transport than a ship.

For Hymes, competence in a language presupposes not only knowledge of the grammar of the language, but also knowledge of how to manipulate the language in different social situations and for different communicative purposes. So, alongside Chomsky's 'grammatical competence', Hymes posited a 'communicative competence'. In other words, in order to function adequately in a language we need knowledge not only of the grammar of the language - formation rules - but also knowledge of how to select the appropriate linguistic forms to suit the particular purpose and context in which the speaker finds himself - speaking rules. The British linguist Halliday has consistently held an analogous view of language.

What implications does this have for language-teaching? Idealisation of one (normally written) variety of the target-language in the early stages of language-learning may well be necessary. It is clearly important to make the earliest phases of language learning as simple as possible. At Honours level at university, however, the time for simplification has passed. Progress here inevitably involves an expansion of the range of varieties a student can cope with. The core grammar (the formation rules) is not longer sufficient. The student needs to add in a sound knowledge of the speaking rules.

There is a grave danger, when we stress the importance of 'communicative competence' alongside 'grammatical competence' that trendy language-teachers will see this as a respectable way out of teaching grammar. Grammar is not a popular subject nowadays. They tried to dodge it in the 1960s with exercises in Skinnerian behaviourism in the language laboratory. This temptation has to be resisted. No language-teaching programme is adequate unless the learner emerges with a sound knowledge of the grammar. It is essential that students emerge with a knowledge of the language as a system. Especially at university, standards of grammatical accuracy must be maintained. It is for this reason that in Aberdeen we have been so adamant about the retention of the prose, with no reduction at all in its role.

However, there clearly is scope for expansion into the area of the speaking rules and 'communicative competence'. There is far more to learning a language than absorbing its grammar: especially at the more advanced levels of learning.

The traditional school exercise of prose-translation has one fundamental shortcoming - it is carried out in a contextual vacuum. When writing his weekly prose, the student generally has no message to get across and no recipient to get it across to. The prime object of the exercise is for the learner to prove to the teacher than he can jump through certain grammatical and lexical hoops.

In real life, however, language use is quite different - it always takes place in a precise situational context, there is always a recipient or recipients, and the object of the talk is always the communication of some message. In other words, the situational context and communicative purpose vitally affect the way the message is expressed. 'Formation rules' and 'speaking rules' operate in conjunction with one another. Our students need to acquire grammar, but we need to instil in them also a knowledge of rhetoric.

The titles of those little books by G Vigner are significant:

Parler/Ecrire et convaincre[5]

That is how I understand teaching language as communication.

What are the objectives of the Aberdeen Travaux pratiques course? The brief we were given was that 'the course should be non-translation, that it should be conducted entirely in French, and that the exercises should as far as possible be contextualised in realistic situations. The course now runs for one hour a week over two years. Groups are between 8-10 students in size.

If we were designing a course in French for special purposes the problem of objectives would not be too difficult to solve.

- businessmen attending a conference in Paris
- managers in Total meeting executives from Paris and inspecting oil rigs,

- a student of forestry on secondment to the French Eaux et Forêts

Learners' needs would be identified and programmes designed to cope with them.

But what are the linguistic needs of our Honours students? Some will enter industry and commerce, some the civil service, some teaching and so on. No precise definition is feasible. We have to teach linguistic skills which are as widely generalisable as possible.

Grammar (the 'formation rules') is clearly central, but that is taught in Aberdeen in the traditional way. What communicative factors are involved?

- broadening students' vocabulary;
- teaching them strategies for certain communicative functions;
- teaching them to cope linguistically with a wide range of social situations.

All of these need to be considered when developing a syllabus, but which should have priority in determining the basic framework of the course? In Aberdeen our thoughts have evolved considerably over the past four years:

I Topics or lexical areas
II Notions and functions
III Skills or activities in specific situations

I Lexical areas

Stimulated by our students' obvious need to expand their vocabulary beyond that of the literary salon, our first instincts were to give priority in categorisation of our course to topic or lexical field. See TABLE DES MATIERES (1).[6] A strong case was made for integrating the teaching of French language with that of French civilisation. However, with only one hour per week at our disposal this proved too ambitious. Indeed the whole idea of giving priority to the lexical field caused problems because useful linguistic exercises had to be jettisoned since they did not fit neatly into our restricted set of lexical areas.

So after two years, we abandoned the idea of building the course around certain lexical/civilisational fields. Lexis and civilisation would inevitably figure large in our course, but they would not constitute the basic framework.

II Notions and functions

Inspired by the work on notional syllabuses of D A Wilkins[7] and Un Niveau Seuil,[8] we set about trying to find notional/functional categories which would sensibly encompass our 36-hour course. Notions and functions, I will remind you, have become technical terms referring to the area we designated earlier as domain - the communicative functions carried out by utterances, eg reporting, persuading, ordering, refuting, questioning, etc.

We attempted to build specific modules around basic communicative functions (eg making objections, refuting criticisms), but this top-down approach did not work. It was difficult to produce exercises which practised only one 'function at a time. To have persisted in doing so would have been quite stultifying for students in final year who had already spent long periods of residence in France. Most of the exercises we were coming up with involved carrying out several 'functions' more or less simultaneously.

So we abandoned a strictly notional/functional approach. By virtue of their contextualisation in realistic situations all the exercises we designed automatically practise particular communicative functions. However, these functions were not seen as a useful way of categorising the whole course. In the end, as you can see from TABLE DES MATIERES (2),[9] we fell back on a far more banal categorisation based on the four fundamental skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

III Skills

Since my talk is about oral/aural skills I shall not deal with the activities of reading and writing here beyond saying that our reading exercises are basically exercises in simple discourse analysis and our writing exercises always involve writing something to someone for some purpose.

What about listening and speaking?

a. Listening

A major feature of communicative theory which I have not emphasised so far is the importance attached to receptive (as distinct from productive) skills. Students need to acquire the ability to receive as well as transmit messages. Indeed they can hardly learn to transmit messages unless they see how native speakers do it. The in-terms currently associated with those ideas are 'comprehensible input' and 'authentic models'.[10]

One of the principal weaknesses of traditional French courses is that they devote very little attention to listening comprehension. In many of our courses the French language is widely read, but it is rarely heard. Lectures in French are exceptional rather than normal - a sharp contrast to the situation even in France where university English courses are largely conducted through the vehicle of English.

Does this mean that our students find listening to French easy? If they find reading comprehension difficult, then listening comprehension is more so.

In our Aberdeen Travaux pratiques course, therefore, we have been making strenuous efforts to develop listening skills. Listening is not a passive activity. It involves an active seeking out of significant signals. So, we have been developing a gradual sequence of exercises in transcription, note-taking, selective listening and French-English interpreting. We are not attempting to produce secretaries or interpreters, we have simply found that these exercises give invaluable practice in listening comprehension.

b. Speaking

Traditionally oral French teaching is seen as polishing up an 'accent' and developing something vaguely termed 'fluency'. Oral French is frequently identified with 'colloquial' French and taught as 'conversation'. This equation is naïve, for clearly there are many different registers of spoken French (ranging from distant to familiar), and different situations of use apart from conversations en tête à tête. Our notion of oral French needs to be refined and expanded.

What sort of spoken French can we profitably deal with in our university courses? What registers should we be concerned with? What situations should we be interested in? Since we are not teaching 'French for special purposes' we cannot answer these questions very precisely. However, they need to be constantly in our mind as we devise interesting and useful activities for our students.

On the question of register we decided that training our students in français familier is perhaps not the best use of our time. After a period of residence in France, students are often good at this register and tend to equate a superficial mastery of it with fluency in French. We decided that français familier is only one variety of spoken French and one that is relatively easily picked up in France. Where students need more help is in more formal varieties of spoken French.

On the question of situation many supplementary queries arose: all speaking exercises were to be contextualised, but in what sorts of situation? Students were to be asked to role-play, but what sorts of roles? No precise answer to these questions can be given. We cannot predict the futures of our students. But the essential point is that students should absorb the principle of adapting their French to the constraints of the situation. The precise selection of our imaginary situations depended on a number of factors.

- could the student reasonably expect to find himself in such a situation?
- is the situation plausible?
- do we possess material (recorded or written) which will give the exercise a point de départ and the student some sort of model to imitate?

In general, we decided that the situations we would place students in would be formal situations with strangers rather than informal situations with friends.

We had an important theoretical debate about whether students should play native-speaker roles (ie pretend to be French) - French school teacher, French lawyer, French feminist - or whether they should be permanently allotted foreigner roles. To begin with we distributed largely native-speaker roles - these were easier to contextualise - but later we abandoned this, and

now we allot only roles where the student remains Anglophone. This reduces the distance the student has to travel to think himself into the role. He will always be British after all.

When the students are in their selected roles and situations, what do they do? Some of the exercises involve 'monologuing', others interacting. The monologuing exercises invite the student to document himself on a topic from written or recorded sources and to give a short exposé (5-10 minutes) to an imagined audience, eg a PR man for an American property developer addressing a press conference to refute press criticism of one of their developments in the Paris banlieue. Students record their exposé on cassette and it is marked by tutors before the class. These monologuing exercises seek to practise rhetorical functions like exposition, narration, reporting, refuting, argument, persuading, etc.

Interactive exercises are not so easy to devise, for role-playing in groups involves acting abilities which not all students possess to the same degree. We have tried simulating formal meetings around an agenda and a body of related documents. The success of this type of class was mixed. Perhaps interactive French is best taught through holding all our Travaux pratiques classes in French. However, a special type of interaction is involved with telephone conversations. This type of exercise can be very productive.

Finally, a word about assessment. No serious innovation in language-teaching can be made until it is sanctioned directly by an examination. The traditional interview oral is a perfectly satisfactory way of testing a student's interactive ability. But it leaves a lot of gaps: we wanted to test students' listening comprehension and their ability to produce sustained French. The Oral in Aberdeen is split into two parts:

Part I	the traditional interview with the external examiner
Part II	a language laboratory component wherein the candidate spends an hour listening to a dossier of recorded material on a particular topic. He then produces a 5-10 minute recording of an exposé based on that material and delivered with a specific (imagined) audience in view. He is given plenty of practice in doing this over the year.[11]

The examiners do not have to make snap impressionistic judgements on the candidate. As in the prose and general essay, we have a permanent record of the student's performance which can be played and replayed and scrutinised by several examiners. See marking criteria.[12]

Conclusion

I have not spent such a long time describing the Aberdeen course in order to blow our trumpet or to propose it as a model for others to follow. We have not found all or even many of the answers to the problems of Honours level

language-teaching: language is too complex and interesting for this. However, we have proved to ourselves that you do not have to be a specialist in applied linguistics to break the traditional mould - five of our seven collaborators are literary critics.

That we must break that traditional mould is to me self-evident. If we fail to expand the traditional methods based on 'grammar' and the written literary language we shall certainly incur the displeasure of our vocationally minded paymasters. Perhaps more seriously still, if we fail to update the theoretical basis of our activities we will jeopardise our intellectual and academic standing. An expansion of our horizons beyond those offered within the traditional model of language, particularly into oral and communicative work, will generate more excitement not only for ourselves, but also for our students. This certainly is the lesson of our Aberdeen experience.

Notes

1. Scottish Universities French Language Research Association, secretary: D Coleman, Department of French, University of Glasgow.

2. HUDSON R A :'Some issues on which linguists can agree', in Journal of Linguistics, 17 (1981), pp 333-343.

3. ADAMSON R et al: Le Français en faculté, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1980.

4. HYMES D: On Communicative Competence, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philiadelphia, 1971.

5. VIGNER G: Ecrire et convaincre, Paris, Hachette, 1975; Parler et convaincre, Paris, Hachette, 1979.

6. Appendix A.

7. WILKINS D A: Notional Syllabuses: a taxonomy and its relevance to foreign language curriculum development, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp 1-20.

8. DE COSTE et al: Un Niveau Seuil, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1976.

9. Appendix B.

10. See KRASHEN S: Principles and practice in second language acquisition, Oxford, Pergamon, 1982.

11. Appendix C.

12. Appendix D.

Appendix A

TABLE DES MATIERES (I)

Introduction

1. Energie-Ecologie p 1
   i Etude de texte: 'Plogoff'
   ii Exposé (enregistré) - exposition
   iii Résumé (écrit) - exposition

2. Urbanisme p 6
   i Etude de texte: 'De l'urbanisme'
   ii Transcription orthographique
   iii Exposé (enregistré) - réfutation

3. Justice p 13
   i Etude de texte: 'Le Secret périmé'
   ii Prise de notes
   iii Exposé (enregistré) - suite d'arguments

4. Commerce, Industrie, Administration p 23
   i Etude de textes: lettres
   ii Résumé oral
   iii Lettres (écrit)

5. Voyages p 27
   i Etude de texte: 'Le Temps des gares'
   ii Groupe de travail - débat
   iii Lettre (écrit) - demande

6. Immigration p 35
   i Etude de texte. 'Des Etudiants très étrangers'
   ii Exposé (enregistré) - rapport

Appendix B

TABLE DES MATIERES (2)

Introduction

A LIRE

Analyse du discours:
1. De l'urbanisme p 1
2. Pourquoi Plogoff se bat p 5
3. Le secret périmé p 8
4. Le temps des gares p 13
5. Des étudiants très étrangers p 16

B ECRIRE

Rapports
1. Ressources naturelles p 20
2. Débouchés professionnels p 22
3. Dossier d'information p 25

Lettres
4. Spécimens p 28
5. Réponses p 31

C ECOUTER

Transcription orthographique:
1. L'enfant dans la cité p 32

Prise de notes:
2. Emile Pollak p 33

Audition sélective:
3. L'expérience Lip p 34

D PARLER

Exposer:
1. La centrale nucléaire p 36

Réfuter
2. Un certain bonheur p 36

Persuader:
3. Le procès de M. Hyard p 39

Rapporter:
4. La mosquée p 42

Parler en public:
5. Les problémes des DOM p 46
6. L'art du discours p 47

Interaction
7. Réunions p 50
8. Parents et professeurs p 51
9. Téléphoner p 55
10. Interpréter p 58

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN Session 1981-82

Examination for the Degree of MA with Honours

FRENCH STUDIES
JOINT STUDIES (FRENCH)

Oral Examination (Part I)

Saturday 5th June (9 am - 12.30 pm)

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1. Préparation

Georges Brassens, qui est mort il y a quelques mois, a accordé très peu d'interviews. Il se trouve toutefois que lors d'une visite en Grande-Bretagne il a expliqué à titre exceptionnel comment il a conçu et écrit une de ses chansons. Imaginez que vous avez eu le privilège d'assister à cet entretien avec Brassens et d'avoir pris des notes. Un enregistrement de l'entretien (9 minutes), dont les détails sont tout à fait inconnus en France, se trouve sur votre bande.

Imaginez ensuite que vous êtes en France et qu'une station de radio locale, genre 'North Sound', prépare une émission intitulée George Brassens à travers le monde. Ayant appris que vous avez assisté à ce rare entretien de Brassens, on vous invite à participer à l'émission et à donner une petite causerie (5 minutes max) sur ses procédés de création.

Le jour arrive, le présentateur dit: 'Eh bien, chers auditeurs, à propos des procédés de création de Georges Brassens, nous avons la chance d'avoir dans notre studio Mme/Mlle/M. X (vous) qui a assisté à une causerie de Georges Brassens en Grande-Bretagne où il expliquait comment il s'y prenait pour composer une de ses chansons, Le Testament. C'est donc avec plaisir, Mme/Mlle/M. X, que je vous donne la parole, pour nous faire connaître la pensée de George Brassens sur la composition de cette chanson ....'

2. Enregistrement

Avant de commencer votre exposé, vérifiez que la machine enregistre votre voix comme il faut, et enregistrez votre nom.

Quand vous aurez fini, rembobinez la bande, mais laissez la cassette en place dans la machine.

Appendix D

L'EXPOSE

i Cohérence interne
- le plan

ii Contenu
- richesse

iii Technique rhétorique
- contextualisation
- adoption du rôle
- ouverture et clôture
- 'panneaux indicateurs'

iv Prononciation
- correction
- articulation (prosodie)

v Vocabulaire
- niveau de langue
- variété lexicale

vi Grammaire
- correction
- variété syntaxique
- cohésion syntaxique (liaison des idées)

COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS AND THE MODERN LANGUAGES DEGREE

Professor Samuel Taylor

University of St. Andrews

The subject proposed to me for this talk was 'What we should be doing'. The temptation could have been to indulge in a polemic exercise, a ritual blood-letting, but this would be pointless in the present company. Moreover, it appears to me that what we need is a clear academic evaluation, a scientific, factual account. If oral-aural skills are ultimately to be established in the universities on a sounder footing we should take a clear look at what kind of footing that might be and the academic grounds for proposing so major a reform in language teaching objectives and methods. I propose, therefore, to offer a critical review of the examined language-teaching curriculum and to assess the proper place of oral-aural skills within this. In the process I would simply note the wisdom of David Wilkins' statement that: 'the bias towards writing could have been corrected without a compensating bias towards speech. A proper balance between the two was all that was needed.'[1]

There appear to me to be three tenable viewpoints on oral-aural skills.

1) That they are **not** an academic study area but a skill and are legitimately dealt with through allowing for residence abroad topped up with conversation classes.
2) That they **do** form a valid academic exercise and should be placed on a proper footing alongside the written skills but separately from them.
3) That they are in vocational terms a major requirement of a graduating linguist AND that they are an essential, academically-valid element in a valid language learning process and further that they enhance the overall intellectual performance of the student. Moreover without this approach to language-learning, claims to have 'studied the language' in systematic terms are shallow.

Of these three, the last is the one I wish to propose.

I shall, therefore, defend a number of propositions in support of this position:

(1) The first proposition is that there are outside social constraints and internal academic constraints on language teaching in universities which we are not at liberty to ignore. This is not merely because we cannot ignore social and economic life outside our walls but because, as Tony Lodge has outlined, good academic arguments undermine our claims to fulfil a valid academic function in our present approach.
2) That it is possible to construct a language learning syllabus which would answer both social and academic requirements.

3) That research and experience suggest an appropriate language learning method.

4) That, as Daniel Coste writes: 'L'approche communicative a eu pour effet de substituer à des certitudes apparentes des questions réelles.'[2] In this situation the new curriculum and method must be intellectually and academically fire-proof. There will therefore be a need for a sustained research and development programme for which the broader teaching community has had little training and for which there is currently no research base.

In other words, there is no alternative, it is a viable course of action and it has major research and development implications.

I. SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC CONSTRAINTS ON UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE DEPARTMENTS

In no part of this paper do I argue against the view that the function of the universities is to train the high-achievers in both skills and intellect. However we form part of an educational system and our students leave us to enter the professions. They are vocational as well as intellectual animals. It is therefore usually acknowledged that university language departments must phase with language teaching in schools and that major developments in secondary level teaching should be noted in tertiary education. I note in this connection just two documents. The first is the recent DES statement on Foreign Languages in the school curriculum in which it is said that 'Discussions so far on draft national criteria for examining at 16-plus are concentrating on changes in the balance of skills away from writing and in favour of oral competence, the use of language more directly related to the demands of everyday communication.' This document has been formally welcomed by the CVCP and by the NCML together with all major national language associations.

The second is the Report of the Scottish Joint Working Party on assessment in foreign languages at 16, the 'Munn-Dunning' development. In their present form, prior to publication in May this year, the Working Party's recommendations are that syllabus and assessment should have as their primary objective, the development of communicative competence and confidence among pupils. By this they understand real language in real use, enabling the language learner to speak, listen and read in conditions which are as authentic as possible. It is the Joint Working Party's intention not merely to give more prominence to the oral aural skills but to swing the nature of oral work much closer towards purposeful exchanges.

The situation in schools has not stood still over the period in which pressure for communicative aims in school language-teaching level has mounted. The decline in the uptake of languages at school is well documented. The deterioration in the position of other languages than French has continued unabated. Studies in Scotland have shown that the overall decline conceals a more significant move away from languages by the high achievers at school,

male AND female.[3] The causes pinpointed have been variously identified but I would highlight some in particular:

1) Disaffection with courses at school which do not generate useful skills.
2) The belief (true or false) that languages, in their present form, have no vocational or cash-surrender value.
3) The choice faced by pupils between unpalatable language courses and alternative courses in sciences which are perceived to be more useful.

In the process school language classes are increasingly deserted by the very ablest linguists. Of those who survive this obstacle course, a small minority opt for languages in 5th and 6th form, increasingly because of lack of aptitude for science, but still in some cases, doggedly, because of love for language. We then face this minority with courses at university in which practical language skills - which have carried pupils right through school - suddenly become a minor concern and we offer courses devised not for the able linguist but for the student of humanities with a parallel aptitude for languages. It might be said that the A-level with its strong literary bias is a sufficient guide for intending university students and a reasonable training for the language-degree candidate. Yet if we deduce from this that 16-18 courses are suitable, given university conditions, we should also note the strong resistance to the A-level in present form that has built up amongst language associations, in the Inspectorate, Headmasters' Association and finally the DES consultative document. French 16-19: a new perspective merely summarises general opinion in stating that 'The course at the post 16-plus stage must, then, prepare the student for real communication and communication is always purposeful.'

If, however, you believe that an A-level based on the study of literature and on translation within the literary registers is in the interests of the pupil's academic development, then you might consult an applied linguist who notes that:

> as a technique of teaching meaning, translation is in the long run unsound ... for learning to be complete there must be contrast ... language teaching has been and still is much more occupied with instilling a general system of language than with enabling the pupil to modulate his language in accordance with features of the social situation ... The study of literature may familiarise the learner with a more formal style although this may not be of great practical value ... If he converses with a native speaker, he will find that he is using a more formal style than the person he is talking to.[4]

The same writer notes, moreover, that:

> I know of no clear evidence that the best way to develop unconscious mastery of the rules of a language is through the initial conscious

> learning of those rules ... it is the informally reported experience of many learners that rules of language learned in this way are rarely fully assimilated and continue to interfere with the spontaneous use of language; even if one believes that every language learner has to acquire the rules of the target language, the question of HOW they are best acquired is still left open.
>
> Most modern methodologists argue against methods which depend on the pupil acquiring an explicit knowledge of the rules of language structure and instead recommend a more inductive approach to learning.

and that

> to use and understand a language we need a communicative as well as a grammatical competence.[5]

There is a crise de foi amongst many language teachers in schools who are aware that a root cause of the decline in their and our subject is the linguistic diet they are forced to offer to match the requirements of examinations based on university entrance requirements. O-levels are devised as a staging post for those proceeding to A-level and are unsuited to those who seek to go no further than O-level. The A-level diet is based not on the needs of the language learner, but on the present diet a student will face once at university. There the linguistic diet is one in which practical mastery of the language rules as revealed by fluent performance is not the primary objective. Instead universities tend still to see this as an explicit knowledge of the rules governing language performance and the trained capacity to translate, with the claim that this encourages accuracy and precision in the use of language. There is indeed a fair consensus amongst informed linguists behind the view that translation is in fact useful as part of a language learning method but that it actively inhibits linguistic performance if used in isolation. It might well be replied by traditionalists that between them, the literary reading programme, conversation classes and residence abroad ensure that the translation technique is not used in isolation, but in response to this I note just two facts:

1) The increasing emphasis over the last thirty years on literary study in the traditional language and literature degree has been accompanied by an apparent deterioration in performance in the prose and version, and by major concern over the performance in the French essay.
2) There has been no scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of traditional methods in achieving their stated objectives. Even if present objectives were sound, therefore, there is no valid evidence to suggest that we achieve them.

In his Aspects of French Language Study at Birkbeck (1973), Michel Blanc endorses the statement by Binet and Darbelnet that:

> Si la traduction est avant tout une discipline comparée, il s'ensuit qu'elle suppose connus les objets qu'elle rapproche, à savoir les deux langues en présence ... on s'est rendu compte, il y a déjà longtemps, que le thème et la version ne sont profitables que si on les pratique à l'intérieur d'un domaine préalablement exploré par d'autres procédés.

It really does become difficult either to sustain present objectives on theoretically sound grounds or to claim that we in fact come anywhere near achieving these objectives by present teaching methods.

There is therefore a fundamental absurdity in allowing the continuation of a situation known to disregard the needs of pupils and teachers in schools, to dissuade many of the ablest language students at school from continuing, to be against the national interest itself, and to do so in the name of language studies at degree level.

The reference here to the 'national interest' relates to the massive documentation which has accrued over recent years on the social and vocational needs of the language graduate in language skill-terms, and on the needs of industry and commerce. We could quote the British Overseas Trade Board Report, the York University Report[6] and Christine Wilding's able digest.[7] We could quote the Report of the US President's commission.[8] We could turn to the various moves within the EEC to create a community languages policy.[9] There is clearly no lack of evidence to show that our deteriorating international trade position and the insularism of much of our present diplomacy is profoundly affected by our linguistic isolation.

If we turn now to what educational psychology and applied linguistics tell us of the second-language learning process, it appears that LANGUAGE LEARNING or PROFICIENCY IN THE USE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE arises when there is:

1) Maximisation of exposure to a rich variety of foreign language source-materials from which a learner may derive and internalise the 'rules' of language.
2) Maximisation of activities within the language (or language-uses) modelled on the activities a learner is preparing for in life and involving both spoken AND the written symbols.
3) The creation and imitation of contextualised models of target language behaviour to allow for the fact that the second-language learner operates not in a bain de français let alone an immersion situation, but a douche discontinue.
4) Analytical support to exploit the analytical abilities of the advanced learner.
5) Concentration on the learning processes rather than those of teaching, to create conditions for optimal learning.

Whether you turn to Corder, Wilkins, Wilkinson or Brumfit you will find the same diagnosis. None claims that applied linguistics can offer a clear

methodological prescription for language studies, but all note it disposes quite rapidly of traditional methods centred primarily on study of the written language in its literary registers supported by a deductive approach to grammar and lexis through translation. This consensus does not, however, state that oral-aural skills alone are the basis of language learning. Indeed Wilkins notes that 'there is no justification for giving long term priority to spoken language in one's teaching method' and that 'every effort should be made to associate spoken and written symbol in the learning process.'[10] It is therefore apparent to me that the primary aim should not be to place oral-aural skills in a uniquely privileged place, but to place them in their proper place in the language-learning process for the advanced adult learning and so create real linguistic proficiency. However, since the kind of proficiency we create is conditioned by the teaching and learning situation we operate then I would also prefer the balance of skills in teaching to be one which is devised to answer the social and professional needs of graduates.

Logically therefore we should now turn to the language learning syllabus, but before I do so it should be noted that discussion of the needs of graduates in language courses should not blind us to the fact that by far the most important beneficiaries of any communicative reform at school level will be those who do not intend to make languages their primary subject, namely all those able all-rounders, scientists, historians, economists, political scientists, etc who have hitherto been denied a form of language study of any direct use to them and who may now continue with language study alongside their primary subjects. The new 16-plus language examinations would suit them perfectly. The I-level is aimed precisely at the able non-linguist, the scientist with an aptitude for languages. Language teachers will therefore now continue to teach the best linguists where before they lost them. That same group will enter university science and commerce courses with a language skill which they will have to abandon unless they choose combined honours such as Engineering and French, French and Business Studies. Unless we are very careful we shall distort the pattern of application by students by forcing them to go not to the best Physics, Engineering or Economics Department but to that small group of universities where combined honours are programmed. The answer, to my mind, is not to rely exclusively on combined honours arrangements but to provide ancillary studies at most universities with language departments accepting a service role in courses of, say, Politics WITH a modern language. This points, therefore, to a university language provision for the non-specialist as well as for the specialist, and to the development of a major national provision of ancillary language studies at all levels from age 16.

II. A COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING SYLLABUS

What first of all are the linguistic needs of the graduate in social and professional life? Technical needs will vary considerably, of course, and there is no guarantee that the language a graduate needs will be the one he studied at school or university. If we thought at all of needs there would be much more Japanese studies, more Spanish and Portuguese, more Arabic. Yet

if we think of our needs in any language, what we expect of ourselves is the capacity to operate with near-native levels of articulacy and fluency, with sensitivity to the social and professional status of our contacts and giving a convincing image of ourselves in the foreign language, handling the normal uses to which language is put (its 'functions'), and able to operate alone, without support from dictionaries or phrasebooks. We should be able to overcome our shyness of error and our own linguistic gaps.

If we translate these social demands into potentially teachable language-skills they might embrace the following:

1) Receptive skills: the ability to grasp the core meaning from authentic French materials spoken or written, to pick up illustrative examples, to pick out and be able to reuse the vocabulary and idiom fundamental to the particular area, and the capacity to digest all of this for re-use in a way which does not usually allow reading from a script.
2) Productive skills: the ability to speak autonomously, that is from memory, or from prompt-notes alone and to provide a clear objective report, setting out the meaning logically even where the original source was not so arranged. The ability to give illustrations, to communicate surface and depth meaning and to do this without allowing one's own views to obtrude. Then to state an opinion, conduct an argument, persuade, dissuade, give orders, inflect statements, express an emotional attitude (confidence, diffidence, commitment, certainty, likes, pleasure, involvement etc). The ability to observe normal social and personal courtesies, to adopt an effective strategy for obtaining the purpose for which you are communicating. You should be able to do this in uninterrupted monologue OR, in a conversation where the rules of dialogue intervene and discourse is interrupted or discontinuous. All of these should be capable of being transposed, with appropriate transformations, into the written mode. In the process you should be capable of creating and preserving a personal persona or identity in the foreign language.
3) Analytical skills: you should have a theoretical command of the French grammar and lexical systems, but more important you should have an internalised grammar system to allow flexibility and eventually sophistication in response. Without such internalised mastery the range of expression and inflection available to you is unduly limited.
4) Social skills: to act as host, guest, correspondent, informal interpreter, translator, to converse on aspects of British and French life (conversation points), to converse simply with French learners of English and English learners of French, to face an oral examiner.

These may seem utopist, but I simply repeat that we judge ourselves by these standards and to the extent that we come to think that we have achieved proficiency it is within such terms. Yet clearly all of these cannot be the objectives of a communicative language teaching curriculum. Any syllabus definition must bear in mind factors other than needs, such as the psychology of the learner, and limitations in contact hours and preparation time. It is also usual to set aside an approach to French for Special Purposes simply

because it is not 'rentable' to explore so many different purposes and since they may later be approached by the student.

In the St Andrews course which forms part of the SUFLRA Honours communicative teaching project we set the following method of COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING:

1) RECEPTIVE SKILLS: Organisation of language input to create increased response to the target language, in spoken and printed forms. This ensures not merely maximisation of exposure to the authentic French language but sharpening of response to it. Students are trained to grasp surface and depth meaning, to extract significant details and core meaning, explicit or implied. They are trained to extract core-lexis and to summarise the content in a logical order. They then devise prompt-notes to allow them to speak about what they have read or heard. This approach is designed to engender a more active approach to the so-called receptive skills and to ensure progression from hearing/listening or from reading to registering and mobilising for re-use. In practical terms this phase is intended to be a pre-class activity.

2) PRODUCTIVE SKILLS: Oral and written self-expression in French. Students are trained to communicate the gist of the message from prompt-notes and without reading from a prepared text. They must introduce the statement, structure it and conclude. In succeeding classes they proceed to situations in which they state agreement or disagreement with what they have absorbed, persuade (arguing in favour or against it), and expressing various attitudes towards it. At all stages the nature of the response is to be determined by sociolinguistic factors (whom you speak to, in what role you speak). You will increasingly be required to make a register shift in reporting the message, presenting it from another viewpoint to a different audience.

Students are required to do this in the context of a reportage, an interview, interrogation, bilateral interpretation, committee game, etc. They are then required to use substantially the same material in a written form, again with clear directions as to the context. In early stages of the course activities are separately presented. In later stages activities involve conscious transfer between these functions.

Since all of this relates to prescribed tasks, which limits the authenticity in certain ways, the students are also required to keep a journal de bord, or personal diary in French. In this the instruction is to write what interests them, but to include in this a running commentary on some contemporary event in the French papers or radio (a Birkbeck technique).

3) ANALYTICAL WORK. Little discourse analysis has been done in the course development to date but it will develop. Present analytical work is on areas where teacher input is essential such as:

- French techniques for argument, persuasion etc.
- Themes such as tense usage, characteristics of the spoken language etc.

- Linguistic analysis of literary text as bridge to literary commentary.
- Oral prosework.
- Correction of class proses and essays related to the course outline where possible.

The theoretical support has furthest to develop, but it will be determined in part by empirical needs. I note en passant that this order of work corresponds closely to Michel Blanc's proposal that it is 'more important to continue to consolidate and extend one's resources for written expression in French than to concentrate on the technique of translation itself', and I note too his reference to the practice at the Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et Traducteurs of Paris University where students are first trained to express themselves orally and in writing before actually translating.

Two things should therefore be apparent in methodological terms. Firstly however important oral-aural skills may be as an objective, it would be an error to establish them on any separate footing at universities as objective and learning method. Language learning is multi-skilled in approach, whatever objective may predominate and to omit any single skill impairs proficiency in the others. Secondly, the St Andrews' curriculum has resisted taking Topics, Functions OR Activities as a primary element in course design. In place of this there has emerged a more pragmatic communicative course design in which the surface structure of the curriculum is one determined by methodological constraints.

Here, therefore, are the main factors we have seen as determining the success or failure of language teaching and learning in communicative studies.

III. A COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING METHOD

In the light of our experience in a pilot project sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation Small Grant scheme, and devised as part of a SUFLRA programme, the following elements appear fundamental to a reappraisal of language teaching and learning methods at university level:

1) The maximisation of exposure to and uses of the foreign language and the scheduling of activities which encourage the student to intensify receptive practice. Receptive practice becomes purposeful and operates both at the thematic/content level and at the lexical level. Since this involves a departure from translation techniques and from conventional pro rata résumé techniques in favour of 'gist-seeking' the procedures involve a major reapproach to receptive practice.

2) The devising of language uses/activities which enforce re-use of the receptive material and which reflect language functions/needs. Activities should also entail personal involvement, socio-linguistic manipulation or adjustment etc.

3) Careful progression between activities to allow induction to the activities themselves, a more systematic approach to the 'functions' and controlled exposure to sociolinguistic factors. This will also allow clear differentiation between objective and subjective or inflected reporting, argument, suasion etc, and the mastery of monologue or sustained discourse before facing the problems of dialogue or discontinuous dialogue.

4) The sequencing of the four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) in a learning cycle or for mutual reinforcement. In methodological terms discussion has emphasised the skills as separate objectives that it was important to keep in balance. In the process the interdependence of the skills in any valid learning cycle or process has been underemphasised. The present method follows intensive receptive practice with intensive oral use, followed in due course by selective written use. In the process, therefore, we seek to avoid repeating the error of 'traditional' language teaching in placing undue emphasis on work within one skill in isolation from the others, whether this be written or oral/aural.

5) Error correction. Since oral-aural practice is a very efficient means for reinforcing error strategies have to be found for identifying and rectifying error ... This cannot be done thoroughly or adequately in oral-aural practice without interfering with that practice, though videotaping may hold out some solutions. Primarily error has to be handled through selective oral comment backed by thorough correction of written work.

6) Social skills: shyness inhibits production. It also produces characteristic error patterns. Productive oral work rapidly moves beyond interpersonal speaking into a form of public speaking and, since this is educationally a valid activity, it is best faced and not shirked. At the same time group dynamics, the roles of tutor and student respectively and the role of the foreign language assistant are à revoir.

7) Residual benefit: the danger of oral-aural methods might be that they generate ephemeral performance without residual consolidation. It is for this above all that the decision to ban scripted speech was made to enforce a degree of memorisation of lexical items, to encourage short-term memory and so change the nature of receptive work in a way that would enhance learning. We certainly build in spite of ourselves through repeated exposure and contact with the French language, but the relative advantages of schedules and unscheduled input, programmed and random exposure, have yet to be evaluated by proper tests. A communicative method has therefore to be seen to increase proficiency in the longer as well as the short term.

8) Finally the analytical support which the student mind will respond to. It remains to be seen how valuable sustained course work on semiology, sociolinguistic theory and other theoretical inputs will pay off, as opposed to sociolinguistic commentary in the context of authentic material encountered in use. We should note that two of these methodological aims, the creation of social skills and the reinforcement of short and medium term memory are of educational benefit to the student regardless of course or career.

IV. ACADEMIC FIRE-PROOFING

We might conclude on a review of the implications of this approach for the academic or intellectual training of the student, as distinct from his training in a specific skill.

There is no need to exaggerate in order to claim clear academic qualities for this concept of language learning. In theoretical terms the communicative language learning method has an impeccable pedigree based on what we currently know of the psychology of the learner and of language learning, as indeed on applied linguistics. This is not the case for traditional language teaching methods.

In reference to traditional objectives (the study of the literary registers and command of the written skill) then it has to be said that conventional methods make inflated claims that do not survive inspection of results in classwork or in final examination scripts. Essay work in particular has caused considerable concern amongst language teachers. Whilst parallel claims by communicative methods exponents also require validation, self-expression in the written mode should be a normal part of the learning cycle in the communicative method. Essay work should therefore be a clear beneficiary. More importantly, however, it appears that what has lacked in conventional language teaching has been an adequate internalisation of the 'rules' as Wilkins stated: 'I know of no clear evidence that the best way to develop unconscious mastery of the rules of a language is through the initial conscious learning of those rules...'.[11] Communicative teaching on the other hand aims directly at the internalisation of the rules reinforced but not replaced by theoretical support and by error correction. Communicative teaching achieves this continuously through contact with the authentic French language in receptive and productive forms. In so far as it confronts the student with language variety, it makes serious discussion of the systems of the French language and synchronic studies far more fruitful.

Linguistic analysis has no formal boundary with literary commentary, and experience suggests that it is more successful to proceed from linguistic to literary commentary within a passage than to attempt to generate linguistic commentary from an overtly literary exercise. In this sense, communicative methods are not merely a bridge with literary studies but potentially the most effective approach to l'écriture.

A final but more important point is that foreign intellectuals and professionals are verbalisers, articulate, fluent and linguistically proficient in their tongue. The French educated middle classes are socially sensitive, cultured and respond to similar qualities in their foreign contacts, whether scholars or businessmen. A high level of linguistic proficiency is not simply a survival-situation passport but a passport to the intimacy and acceptance of those we meet. In the most practical of terms it means that we meet not just those who happen to speak English in a foreign setting but those we really should meet, our real counterparts, their families, those we really have to convince.

In terms of university study too we may seriously doubt the literary competence of those without certain levels of linguistic proficiency. So much of what a Pascal, La Fontaine, Voltaire or Sartre writes is audience-orientated, a linguistic strategy that the term 'style' hardly covers. So much of what is truest of a de Gaulle or a Proust is in the resonances of their language. So many translations change the nature of what is being said by the author, not merely his words. So much so-called 'literary commentary' covers themes without reference to language and then glosses the language in ways that show total uncertainty as to what 'style' is, and what can be said about it. Lectures on stylistics alone can hardly cure this. The breaking down of the myth that language and thought are separable is central to any communicative approach to language learning and it must affect the quality of literary study itself.

What colleagues perhaps question in casting doubt on the academic value of this form of study is their own self-confidence in the role of language teacher in this new guise. Moving from guru to animateur is by no means the least demanding aspect of this work. Moreover very few within the profession have research qualifications in this field and it becomes less easy to relate personal research and teaching in this area. Nor did the terrible years of Skinner enhance the appeal of this work. Add to that the removal of all funding in 1970 by the government of the day, the consequent depletion of the reservoir of competent manpower and the low rating in which language teaching is held by some and the picture is not reassuring. We are forced to advertise for these language teaching animals but we are inclined to view them as mongrels rather than academic borzoi. The low status of this area, the insufficiency of qualified manpower, the unconcern of the UGC and DES and the unavailability of funding make our situation even worse.

The Economic and Social Research Council, formerly the SSRC, has come to our aid but so far has not adapted to all our needs. There are immense areas where there is a research vacuum that we have to fill before we may make claims that we cannot always justify at present. There is a communication gap, to make matters worse, between ourselves as language teachers in universities and applied linguisticians and university educationalists. Few of them concern themselves with our field and yet they will claim that their questions should be answered and their standards adhered to.

I suggest therefore that we proceed to establish the communicative methodology with scrupulousness and integrity and that we gradually create a satisfactory research base in those areas where it is lacking at present, or where research conducted in other fields is tested in language teaching. Having said this the fact still remains that this degree of scruple has not been general in university language teaching before now and that the evidence from existing research, set out above, leaves no doubt that only this way may real linguistic proficiency be achieved. Society demands this proficiency of us and the effects of this form of language learning have clear and positive implications for academic studies. It is not, therefore, a choice between linguistic proficiency and academic integrity or the intellectual development of the student. If communicative studies are designed in the manner

suggested then the three are closely interlinked. They will only fall short of this standard if resources for their proper development continue to be refused by universities, UGC and government and if research and development fail to generate course materials and methods of an appropriate type.

NOTES

1. WILKINS, D A: Second Language Learning and Teaching, 1974, p 62.
2. D COSTE, in le Français Dans le Monde, mai-juin 1980, No. 153, p 37.
3. DICKSON, Campbell: 'The State of Modern Languages' in Collaborative Research Newsletter, 1979, Centre for Educational Sociology, Edinburgh University.
4. WILKINS, D A: Linguistics in Language Teaching, 1972, pp 130, 132, 143.
5. WILKINS, D A: Linguistics in Language Teaching, pp 155, 173, also Second Language Learning, p 19.
6. EMMANS, HAWKINS and WESTOBY: The Use of Foreign Languages in the Private Sector of Industry and Commerce, 1974.
7. WILDING, C: Languages, Education and Industry: a summary of reports and conferences, University of Aston, 1980.
8. Strength through Wisdom. A Critique of United States' Capability, Washington, 1979.
9. Education Action Programme at Community Level. The Teaching of Languages in the Community, Commission of the European Communities, COM (78) 222 Final, 1978.
10. WILKINS, D A: Second Language Learning and Teaching, pp 64-65.
11. WILKINS, D A: Linguistics in Language Teaching, p 173.

THE PLACE OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE HIERARCHY OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

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I should like to begin, if I may, by expressing my thanks and offering an apology. My thanks go, of course, to the organisers of this conference for inviting me to address you today. For I am a representative of a sister and neighbouring university which has, in the past, tended to adopt what is known as a traditionalist approach to the study of modern languages. The extent to which this approach may perhaps be changing will, I hope, become clearer in the course of what I have to say, and one of the reasons for this possible change is linked to the apology with which I am also beginning this talk. For my reason for arriving late, and for not being able to attend more than a small number of the other sessions, is very simple. I am at the moment in the middle of the twenty-fourth of the intensive courses in administrative and legal French which we are currently putting on in Leeds for a group of Senior British civil servants from a variety of Ministries in Whitehall. The kind of teaching which we offer in these courses, which began some eleven years ago, when it became obvious that this country was going to join the European Community, is indeed the immediate reason for my being invited to address you. The basis for my apology is therefore, as they say, a fairly relevant one. But I would like to make the apology, and to say how much I am looking forward to seeing the other contributions in print. It is indeed a great honour as well as a great pleasure to be here, and I am sure that the conference will be a great success.

One of the clearest and most uncomfortable memories which I have of my schooldays is of my relationship with the gym master - or, as we would say nowadays, the P.E. specialist. He was a likeable man, who in spite of having been recently demobilised from the Army for reasons of age - this was in 1943 - was still quite extraordinarily agile. Indeed, until the Olympic gymnasts began to appear on the television screen, I had never seen his like for doing double back flips on a narrow bar, for vaulting backwards over a horse, for suspending himself upside down for long periods from whatever parallel bars happened to be available, and for swinging Tarzan-like on the ropes and rings above the school swimming pool. Unfortunately, however, my admiration was sensibly diminished by the fact that he expected me to perform the same feats, and gave vent to a number of critical remarks about my character, personality, and general unsuitability to lead men in battle - this was in 1943 - as he became increasingly aware of how totally unable I was to imitate him.

Eventually, we reached a compromise, whereby I was allowed to climb ropes - the one thing, curiously enough, that I could do - while he went off with the more athletic members of the form and initiated them into the mysteries of

his craft. Yet I was not - and here, I hope, the relevance of these reminiscencies will start to become clear - the only person whose physical skills stood in the same relationship to his as my students' verbal and intellectual skills stand to mine. Indeed, I represented more or less the norm as far as the level of ability in the school as a whole was concerned and we were consequently all a great trial to the man who was universally and quite affectionately known as the Sergeant-Major. For he genuinely could not understand why we had such difficulty in emulating him. For him the art of doing a one-two-three jump over a five foot high vaulting horse was as simple and easy as it is for me nowadays - and has been for some time - to discuss existentialism, Marxism, structuralism, Shakespeare and the musical glasses either in English or French for hours on end without stopping except for the occasional intake of alcohol. So that whenever I feel a certain impatience at the extremely tongue-tied performance which my students put up either in a tutorial or in an examination situation, I try to think back to Sergeant-Major Perry and borrow some of the patience which he eventually acquired.

There is, however, an important difference. Since P.E., like the rules of cricket and articles of faith of the Anglican Church, was a compulsory part of the curriculum at my school, there was some excuse for those of us who were not very good at it. After all, we had not elected to come to the school principally to do P.E. There were other things we could do - I was especially good at remembering the dates of battles and writing essays on goodness, beauty and truth - so that we did have something to fall back on. But when the students who have chosen to come to the French Department at Leeds, and have proved their suitability to do so by obtaining B in French, B in a second subject and C in a third, show a total inability to handle the spoken word, in English as well as in French, I sometimes wonder whether I am not the victim of some malign pedagogic jester, a tormentor akin to the one who once sent a colleague of mine in the Department of Fine Art an undergraduate who was colour-blind. Not, I may add, that I regard my students at Leeds as particularly bad in this respect. I was once examining at another University, which shall be nameless, and was having a somewhat halting conversation with a young man who was in the process of taking Final Honours in French and German. After fifteen rather painful minutes, he eventually entrusted me with his hitherto secret but nevertheless firmly held view. He considered that the human species had taken a wrong turning along the evolutionary path when it had decided to adopt language as its principal mode of communication.

It may well be, of course, that it is because of some dim apprehension of how many students actually do hold this view that University courses in foreign languages have, until fairly recently, attached relatively little importance to the use of the modern spoken language. Indeed, even nowadays, this rarely constitutes more than an eighth of the total marks awarded in Finals; and in none of the ten Universities which have so far paid me the honour of inviting me to act as External Examiner in French has there been any kind of basic mark which the candidate must obtain at the oral examination before being awarded an Honours Degree. Had there been such a hurdle, then between a half and two thirds of the candidates I have examined would have failed, and

this would not have been brought about by the application of the linguistic equivalent of Sergeant-Major Perry's criteria of what constituted physical fitness. Although some of the candidates I have examined at Polytechnics have been a little less tongue-tied than the average University student, there is no doubt in my mind that the ability of most graduates in French to speak the language in a coherent and interesting manner is woefully inadequate. The question is, whose fault is it? Is it theirs, for failing to acquire in a foreign tongue the fluency which they generally do not possess in their own? Or is it ours, for expecting them to develop while under our tuition a set of skills which we make no real attempt to communicate to them?

It is a question which I often ask myself, as I ponder the question which I have been invited to discuss today: not only that of the place of spoken language in the hierarchy of language skills but also that of the transferability to a University Honours Course in modern languages of the philosophy and technique of instruction which have characterised the twenty-three courses which we have put on during the last ten years in Administrative and Legal French for Senior British Civil Servants. For these courses have proved successful, and I have a number of reasons for saying this. If they had not done so, the Whitehall Ministries which pay for them would not be sending us so many pupils. For the cost is some £650 per head for eleven days full board and intensive tuition, and this is a sum which is at one and the same time sufficiently small to be understood by the economy experts in Whitehall and sufficiently large to be at the receiving end of the cuts which these experts apply if they receive unfavourable reports. Moreover, both our victims - that is to say, the Civil Servants attending - and ourselves have noticed a distinct improvement in their ability to understand and to speak French at the end of the eleven day period which they spend with us and in which they are allowed - and allow themselves - to use no other language. The instruction which they receive begins at nine in the morning and goes on until nine-thirty in the evening. And it includes a number of different linguistic exercises.

These include some twenty-two hours in the language laboratory, in which they concentrate not only on the usual linguistic drills but also on the understanding and transmission of messages containing numbers. We require them to make telephone calls in French, with the usual obstacles - simulated, of course - which French secretaries and concierges can create, and to write a letter confirming in writing th arrangements made verbally. For I do not myself think that skill in speaking a language can for long be divorced from the ability to it. This is something which can be tested everyday by listening to the way people speak and seeing how they write their own native language, and if we had our civil servants for longer, we should certainly want to give them more written exercises. 'Writing', as Bacon observed 'maketh an exact man', and I am not convinced myself, if I may digress away from what we do with our civil servants and towards the official title of my task, that there is any dichotomy between the ability to write and the ability to speak a language. It is of course the case, as I expect most teachers here will have noticed, that most of our students do write both their own language and the foreign language they are studying a good deal better than they speak it. This is an impression which underlies what I shall have to say later about the

question of confidence and national attitudes towards communication, when I come to what might be the more optimistic side of my talk.

Our civil servants are also taught the correct way to write a letter in French, are taken through a specimen set of committee minutes in French, are given lectures on Community law, on French history and the structure of the French civil service, with particular reference to the role of the Grands Corps de l'Etat. They are told about le franglais, les faux amis, and French Trade Unions. They spend some fifteen hours analysing texts which are particularly relevant to their own area of expertise - one of my colleagues, incidentally, became something of an expert herself on les maladies des arbres fruitiers, and at one stage I myself understood not only le système monétaire européen but also les montants compensatoires - and have the unusual and, I am told, stimulating experience of being interviewed in French in front of a television camera and having their performance played back to them. They also have some fifteen hours in conversation with French native speakers, and some ten hours each of individual tuition. They do a certain amount of prose work - yes; in its place, it can be quite a useful tool, and I shall be coming back to this point - and are required, before they come, to do a fairly stiff grammar test which one of my colleagues then marks and spends four hours analysing with them. There are a number of other exercises which are a little complicated to explain but which fit into what I hope is a simple but consistent philosophy of language teaching.

This is organised round two central principles: you make it absolutely full-time; and you ensure that it is constantly relevant to the perceived interests and immediate needs of the participants. You thus avoid the problem which Eric Hawkins aptly summarised when he described the normal way in which we teach modern languages against a constant background of English as 'gardening in a gale'. For I need hardly add that the only language spoken at mealtimes and in the bar is French. We also avoid the criticism most frequently voiced by undergraduates who are asked to comment on their courses in modern languages. For it is a fact that the development of ecce ille into celui-ci is not always perceived as immediately relevant to the problems of chatting up the birds in Toulouse or trying to obtain a reader's ticket at the Bibliothèque Nationale, any more, for that matter, than is Stendhal's treatment of the Napoleonic myth in Le Rouge et le Noir, or even Sartre's struggle with the problem of freedom. In contrast, the concentration on the topics in which our civil servants have a professional interest is probably the most important factor in producing what I think is the final proof of how successful these courses are. Our civil servants talk. They talk to us to the point where we occasionally find difficulty in giving them the instruction which we planned. And they talk to one another, in French, even - or perhaps I should say, especially - when we are not there. The Civil Service College, under whose auspices we put these courses on, are very pleased with us.

But you will probably have realised, even as I explained what we do with our civil servants, how very hard it would be to translate this into a University course. To begin with, it presupposes not only a staff-student ratio of

roughly two to one. It also requires a readiness on the part of the teachers involving themselves in these courses to work a very full day. I have mentioned the regret which I feel at not being able to attend the rest of this conference, and hope now that you will appreciate why I cannot stay. It would be unfair if I expected my colleagues to be there for breakfast, dinner, lunch and tea if I am not going to be present myself, and a course of this kind can work only if the members of the teaching staff look upon it as a ten hour a day job. Not many University teachers are going to do this even for a brief period, and I doubt whether even Sir Keith Joseph would expect it to form a normal part of one's contractual obligations over a whole academic year. It is also difficult to see how courses of this kind can be fitted into the university year as it is presently constituted -though I shall be coming to this - or how they could be combined with the subsidiaries in Philosophy or Greco-Roman civilisation which so often accompany an Honours course in French, German or Spanish.

There are also a number of other, pedagogically more interesting reasons why the techniques which have proved so successful with French at Leeds that they are currently being used with German at UMIST, cannot be easily adapted to the teaching of undergraduates. The first of these is perhaps best illustrated by the reintroduction of Sergeant-Major Perry and his vaulting horse. For it was not only because they were already fairly athletic and good at jumping over things that members of the first eleven also showed themselves adept at the exercises set for us by the Sergeant-Major. Such pupils also had a certain amount of physical confidence in themselves which enabled them not only to approach the parallel bars with confidence but also to adjust themselves without much psychological disturbance to any failure to do the double back flip considered an essential accomplishment in any future tank commander. After all, they knew that they could run rings round the Sergeant-Major if he were ever to venture out onto the football field with them, and the same applies, pari passu, to any Counsellor from the FCO or Assistant Secretary from the Ministry of the Environment who finds the linguistic exercises set for them at Leeds a little beyond their immediate comprehension. For if they were to feel dispirited by their failure to use the imperfect of the subjunctive correctly or to translate neuf cent soixante dix-sept mille, sept cent quatre vingt dix-huit immediately into English, they would be able to find immediate consolation in the indubitable fact that I would cut a very poor figure indeed if asked to explain the complexities of Albanian foreign policy, or the most recent European Community ruling on the transport of dangerous chemicals, and on which they are the acknowledged experts. For one of the reasons why our undergraduates are so reluctant to say anything in a foreign language is that they are, as it were, putting their whole personality and ideal self-image on the line every time they open their mouth. Since they know nothing at all apart from French, German or Spanish, and not even these very well, they have absolutely nothing to fall back on. This is indeed once of the major factors inhibiting the development of oral skills among undergraduates reading modern languages at the University, and it is very difficult to see what can be done to give our students the confidence needed to chance their arm, to make mistakes, and thus to improve in the only way possible: by having these mistakes corrected.

This is something which our civil servants are prepared to do, and I think it is a strong argument in favour of a more general change in the pattern of higher Education in this country. For I have always held the view that University education, like claret and sex, is somewhat wasted on the young, and the experience of teaching French at a fairly high level to small numbers of intelligent and highly motivated adults has reinforced this prejudice. We ought, in the Universities, to be planning a lot more courses of this kind for adults who missed out on some aspect of their education when they were in their late teens or early twenties. It is one of the ways in which we are going to survive when the effects of the falling birthrate of the late sixties and early seventies begin to show themselves.

I should of course have added, when describing the different techniques which we adopt for our civil servants, that we require of anyone coming on our course roughly the equivalent of an A-level pass in French. The fact that we always have a waiting list for the eighteenplaces available on each course says much for the argument that early and compulsory exposure to modern languages teaching does leave circuits in the brain which are relatively easily reactivated. Before they come to us, our civil servants are also encouraged to spend thirty or forty hours brushing up their French, generally with the help of the Diplomatic Service Language Centre. This, too, is arranged by the Civil Service College, which also does the job of advertising our courses, processing applications, and deciding who is going to come. The mundane details of how much money it is going to cost, where our civil servants are going to live - in a very comfortable Hall of Residence now called Fairburn House, and which used to be Albert Mansbridge College - and who is going to meet them at the station, are handled by the Special Courses Division of the University's Department of Adult and Further Education.

There are also, however, other reasons why any systematic transfer to undergraduate courses in modern languages of the techniques of instruction which we have used for the last eleven years with our Higher Executive Officers, our translators, our ambassadors, and our experts in pig marketing will not be a straightforward or easy undertaking. For not only will such a transfer come up against the psychological difficulties, which I have already tried to adumbrate, of applying to adolescents a set of techniques designed primarily with adults in mind. It will also involve a complete revision of the ideas which have, up to now, inspired the teaching of modern languages in our universities. A good deal, in other words, will have to go, and I am not sure that the price we shall be required to pay will not be too high.

For in most Universities, the underlying philosophy of modern language teaching has not been a utilitarian one, and has not been consciously aimed at improving oral fluency. These models, from cognate if somewhat different disciplines, have tended to dominate it. On the one hand, there has been the shadow of F.R. Leavis, on the other the vision of either classical or modern Greats. We have tried, in other words, to make our students either into literary critics, or into historical philologists, or into people with some nodding acquaintance of how to apply a knowledge of politics, philosophy or economics to the understanding of a foreign culture. Each of these aims has

been seen as involving a somewhat lengthy process, needing a full three if not four years, and the application of what you might call gradual impregnation rather than total immersion. For as I am sure we have all noticed, metaphors describing language learning always seem to come from an aquatic context, and we habitually refer to 'total immersion' when speaking of our courses for civil servants, with everything that this implies by way of the danger of drowning. But total immersion of the kind we have practised on our twenty-five year old translators, our thirty-five year old Assistant Principals, our forty-five year old Under Secretaries and our fifty year old Ambassadors is not really compatible with the study by eighteen or nineteen year olds of Spanish literature of the Golden Age, the novels of Franz Kafka, or the French theatre of the seventeenth century.

I realise that I have so far brought you, as Anglican priests say when speaking of South Africa, nought for your comfort. Indeed, there has even been a touch of the disillusioned tones which Sergeant-Major Perry used to adopt towards my schoolfellows and myself as he compared us, to our understandable disadvantage, with the men he had had under his command for what he called 'full-time training'. The implication invariably was that he could make even us perform somersaults over the parallel bars if he had us at his disposal for twenty-four hours a day, though in this respect I am very different from him. I am under no illusion as to my ability to make my students speak with greater fluency, even if I were to subject them to the kind of treatment we mete out to our civil servants. Most of them have given me to understand, when I have taxed them with their taciturnity, that they remain silent because they have nothing to say. As a very talkative person myself, I find this difficult to believe, much as an alcoholic can have no imaginative grasp of the phenomenon of teetotalism, and I should like to make it clear that I attach no general virtue whatsoever to fluency of speech. My ideal is a taciturn Chartered Accountant whose hobbies are Do-It-Yourself and playing long rounds of silent golf, and it is only as a result of the triumph of genes over aspirations that I am standing here today. As a private man, I totally applaud my students' refusal to add to the babble of words which characterises the human condition. But as someone who is paid from the public purse to teach foreign languages, I have to adopt something of the attitude of the athletic Sergeant-Major Perry to the clumsiest members of the awkward squad. What, I wonder, can be done to make my students better at expressing themselves, preferably in a foreign language?

Now it may be that history will do this for me. My own explanation of the taciturnity which characterises my students is that they are suffering from a Puritan hangover. The injunction in Matthew V, 37 - 'Let your communication be: Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these commeth of evil' - entered very deeply into the English soul, and can perhaps be countered only by increased exposure to those Continental influences which the Puritans so firmly rejected. In a way, as our experience with the Civil Service has shown, this is already happening. For in the past, no-one represented more adequately the English ideal of unimpeachable taciturnity than the Whitehall Civil Servant, and yet there they are, in Leeds, at this very moment, chattering away as though Bunyan and Cromwell had never been born.

Perhaps, as a result of our continued exposure to Europe, a gradual change will come over our attitude towards communication in general as well as to foreign languages in particular. Perhaps we shall cease to act as though Quentin Crisp really meant it and was right when he said that there was no point in learning to speak French or German because everybody knew that foreigners were only pretending and all started to speak English again as soon as our back was turned. But until this country's membership of the European Community has the same effect upon undergraduates as it has had upon the Civil Service, is there anything we can do?

In spite of the pessimism which has informed most of what I have said so far, I think there might be, though I hope that my pessimism has had the intended effect of warning people off the idea that there are easy solutions. If we are going to try to make our students into better speakers of French, German or Spanish by using the techniques developed for teaching civil servants, the structure and content of our University courses in modern languages are, as I have already hinted, going to have to change quite radically. The term will no longer be a leisurely stroll through the weekly prose, translation and conversation class, interspersed with the occasional literary tutorial. It will have to consist, instead, of a fortnight during which the student works hard at private preparation of a number of texts, in the target language, dealing with a particular topic - let us say, for example, Great Britain's membership of the European Communities. Some of these texts will naturally be on tape, so that the student will be able to hear the words as well as see them, and this fortnight's preparation will lead up to a week of very intensive instruction of the kind I outlined a quarter of an hour ago. Such instruction will, of course, make quite a demand upon the staff as well as on the student, and we shall all have to put in a lot more contact hours. Then, after this week's intensive tuition, the student will be required to submit written work based on what she or he has learned during the previous three weeks. There will then be a reading week, before the same pattern begins in the second target language. For I do not think that we should discourage the process whereby most students do take two foreign languages, though they will obviously do so in a very different way from the present pattern. The study of literature, for example, will be replaced by that of history, politics and contemporary institutions, and I do not think that there will be much time for comparative historical philology.

Will it work? Well, it might be worth giving it a trial. Indeed, if my understanding is correct, a number of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education are doing something similar, and I look forward to the comments from colleagues who teach in such institutions. Such an alteration in the pattern and content of our teaching will, of course, mean the virtual abandonment of its traditionally humanistic content, and I hope that there will also be comments on this point as well. These changes will be accompanied by a number of other alterations, such as the increase to one third of the total of marks in Finals for a student's performance in an extended oral. This, I think, if I might be allowed to introduce a topic which Robert Crawshaw is going to talk about in greater detail, is the correct indication of the importance which I would like to give to spoken skills in the

hierarchy of modern language teaching and learning, though here again there will have to be some fundamental changes in the type of oral which we require our students to take. It will not, for example, be what it tends to be nowadays, a short chat on what the student did in France and which books she or he prefers. It will be much more like the kind of specimen lesson and explication de texte required at the French agrégation, and will last upwards of three quarters of an hour. It will test the ability to speak coherently, from notes but without reading them, on a topic of some intellectual interest, to understand and respond to questions and objections, and to show an analytic awareness of the content of the course which the student has just taken. The second third of the marks should, in my view, be given for the student's ability to write both the foreign language and her or his own, while the remaining one third should be given for the range of actual knowledge shown. It is, I recognise, a considerable change from the present pattern, where between a half and two thirds of the marks are given for content, which in practice means the ability to write essays on literature or on what I might call a theoretical knowledge of how the language works and has grown up, and I do take the point that jibes from the School of English about modern languages being 'the applied sciences of the Arts Faculty' will then come to have some foundation in fact. However, since we in the Conservative Party take the view that such prosperity as we enjoy in modern Britain is very much the product of the applied sciences, there is, as Brutus observed to Cassius, no terror in this threat. It passes me by as does the idle wind, which I respect not.

The changes I am talking about will also have to be introduced simultaneously by all the modern language departments at any given University. Anyone who has had the experience of introducing curriculum changes will sympathise here with the remark that trying to carry out reforms at a University is like trying to make love to an elephant. It is extremely difficult, there is no pleasure whatsoever, you stand in imminent danger of being crushed, and you are unlikely to see any results for at least three years. A certain amount of patience will be much in demand, and once again the example of Sergeant-Major Perry will have to be much in people's minds. For he had to recognise that although he personally took great delight in performing on the parallel bars, and had a quite natural aptitude for it, such skills did not come naturally to everybody. We shall still have to be prepared for some pretty silent sessions, animated only by the monologue of the tutor, and by the short, compulsory talks prepared in advance by the participants. For we have to remember that we are all, in relations to our pupils, linguistic Sergeant-Major Perrys, and we must fight - as he fought every day, and as I still fight - against the temptation to say that if I can do it, then so can you. But at least we shall be able to say that we have got our eye on the ball, and that we are trying to do for our students what the tax payers who happen to think about our activities expect us to be doing. I shall, myself, regret the disappearance of literature as anything but an occasional adjunct to a modern languages course - it can come into the reading week, I suppose - and should be most grateful to anyone who suggests how we might keep it. After all it's what I have spent most of my time on, so it would be reassuring to know that it will have some function in my recycled existence.

AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF SPOKEN GERMAN

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In teaching foreign languages it is often assumed that for each target language there is one particular standard which should be the central subject of the instruction programme. If we apply this assumption to ourselves and attempt to pinpoint what is at the centre of our language teaching, it will not be difficult, in most cases, for us to define the German language as something uniform, standardized and binding: we see the grammar in the background, the lexicon, a solid framework of rules, a more or less strictly fixed structure which tells us something about potential linguistic usages in German.

This kind of view of the language is of a practical nature and, therefore surely fundamental to the study of the German language in a foreign country. However, it is a view which has been questioned by the findings of sociolinguistics, and from these findings we know that linguistic behaviour is partially determined by social factors. That means language is not the product of the abstract grammatical system but of the actual usage of individuals and of whole social groups in particular everyday situations. Since this actual language usage embraces a great variety of forms, a large number of different standards can also be expected.

Learning to recognize and becoming familiar with these different standards should be something which is encouraged as actively as possible, when the aim is to learn a language as a native language. For in that learning situation it is of central importance for social varieties in language to be grasped.

However, in studying German as a foreign language in a non-German-speaking country, the aims must necessarily be different. In this case, for various reasons, and particularly because of the time factor, reduction and selection are imperative. That the decisions taken during this process have to be predominantly in favour of uniform grammatical norms, and therefore in favour of the written language, is undisputedly the case.

However, somewhat less undisputed is the view that the standards and structures of the written language can then be transferred more or less in their entirety to all other forms of the language, in particular to the spoken form, and thus that there is no important difference between spoken and written. It would follow that the spoken performance can be assessed using criteria applied to the written language. This assessment sometimes even leads to the conclusion that the spoken language is less complete in its forms and structures than the written language, that it is often incorrect and inconsistent.

In view of the differing patterns involved in the production of spoken and written language, this kind of naive or superficial equation of the two language forms seems unjustified, especially if we are interested in the general spoken language of everyday life. This language is used among friends and for everyday matters of all kinds, and a typical feature of it is its spontaneity. I should like to refer shortly, for the sake of comparison, to some of the differences underlying the two language forms.[1]

1. Firstly, it may be stated that while speaking is usually an activity which is not perceived as work, writing is generally considered an activity with clearly work-like characteristics. Writing presupposes a certain amount of systematic planning, it is deliberate, it requires conscious attention and we feel tied to the task of writing. It therefore results in tiredness much more quickly than speaking.

2. Secondly, there are fundamental differences in the relations between the thought process and its realization in language. For speaking, we develop our thoughts successively during the speech process, concentrating our memory and our attention mainly on the topic of the speech. This means severe limitation on the control of speech formulation, which has an adverse effect on the speech performance, be this in the form of errors, repetition, hesitation. And once the speaker has uttered something, it cannot be erased. The spoken utterance at any one moment is fixed and can only be cancelled by a subsequent newly formulated additional utterance. Thus two contradictory expressions can follow each other, one of which would be eliminated if the utterance were written down. This results in redundancy in the spoken language whose most obvious characteristic is that it needs very many more words than the written version of comparable information. In the case of writing, on the other hand, the detailed development of ideas before they are written down enables us to formulate our language very carefully. When writing, we can easily reconsider our product and subsequently check it, and this means that errors are minimized. Concentration and complicated structures in linguistic formulation are thus possible in the written language. This results in a high information content of sentences and an accelerated communication flow.

3. A further difference worth mentioning concerns the great importance of intonation for the syntactic patterning of the spoken language. By means of intonation - and also, of course, of stress - components of an utterance which have a particular logical or emotional function can be accentuated. Any section of the utterance can be given the character of a sentence by means of intonation. We can say that the syntactic function of intonation in spoken language is so important, that the function of other means of syntactic structuring is severely limited. In addition, intonation also plays an important part in the non-syntactic area. In conjunction with speed, volume and rhythm of speech, it provides further information on the content of the utterance and on the personality of the speaker, for example. Since coding in the written language is by means of optical signals, the intonation has to be put into writing. Substitute symbols for intonation are punctuation, underlining, typographical aids and layout structure of the written text. But

these are still very limited and incomplete substitutes. For this reason, other syntactic tools are given far greater importance than in the spoken language; particularly word position, sentence construction, use of inflected forms and particular types of word, such as conjunctions. It is also lexical aids which have to take on the above-mentioned emotional functions of intonation in the written language.

4. A fourth distinguishing feature of spoken, in contrast to written, language is the use of extra-linguistic means of communication - aspects such as mimicry, gesticulation and speech situation. These aid the spoken language since they themselves have a communicative function and therefore many things can remain unsaid. The unimportant and the obvious can be dispensed with and the listener easily understands such statements in spite of their linguistic incompleteness, because he can instinctively complete them using extra-linguistic aids. The proportion of extra-linguistic communication aids in the written language is extremely small. Really, only the common situation of writer and reader can take on a communicative function. Otherwise, the communication is exclusively based on the primary linguistic means of communication, which should therefore be all the more detailed and unambiguous.

On the basis of the above points on the differing conditions under which spoken and written language are produced, it can be seen that the difference between speaking and writing is obvious, and that language can be divided into a spoken and a written version. Whether or not this two-way division should be promoted as a fundamental classification principle for the German language is not relevant here. What is important is that differences of sufficient magnitude exist, and that a discussion of these differences perhaps ought to be included in timetables and lecture courses.

It could be claimed that the differing structures of the two language forms are not denied and are, in fact, completely recognized by the inclusion in language courses of a period spent abroad in a German-speaking country; the work on the spoken language during this period abroad is so intensive that a good grasp of its peculiar characteristics, as contrasted with the written language, is guaranteed. To a certain extent, this is a valid point. There is no doubt that when students return from abroad they show clear improvements in their choice of linguistic expression, a more versatile use of language and greatly increased fluency, in addition to significant advances in personal maturity and a deeper understanding of the political, economic and social situation in the country visited.

However, it must be said that in the case of many students, this progress is not accompanied by the acquisition of or an improvement in the use of typical forms of spontaneous spoken German. There is much more likely to be an improvement in producing speech which is oriented towards the norms and strategies of the written language, speech which seems too perfect, stiff and ponderous in the spontaneous everyday situation, speech which is simply not that which would be used by a native speaker of German. Thus the students speak grammatically correct German in individual situations, but

they do not say what a German would say in the same situation, or what the German listener in that situation expects.

For example, there is a noticeable tendency to attempt the formation of extensive sentences which are as complete and grammatical as possible, when the simplest sentences and bare outlines would really suffice. This perhaps has something to do with the difficult sentence construction of German, which the students have finally mastered. They wish to show this and are therefore not content with half-finished constructions. The students show a tendency, even in the most spontaneous everyday situations, towards presenting the facts in such a way that they would be understandable for someone not directly involved or present in the conversation. However, this is not necessary, since the spoken utterances are only intended for persons who are present and who do not therefore need to have the context described to them in detail.

If we observe what happens when we talk to each other in an everyday situation we can see that only that which is directly relevant is uttered. As has already been mentioned, those involved in the conversation **know** what they are talking about. They give instructions, ask questions, provide information, argue, etc. The language they use is disjointed and erratic. Sentences are begun but not completed, or the speaker starts in the middle of a sentence. The speaker constantly corrects himself. Even the completed sentences are short and simple, coordination is predominant over subordination. It is often sufficient to use individual words and phrases, clichés and stereotype repetitions, surrounded by a large number of particles, accompanied by a gesture or a particular facial expression. This type of language is widespread and is spoken by everyone to some degree. It is understood because it is used in a definite situation in which it is unambiguous. Situation and language complement each other and belong inseparably together.

It is important to find the reasons why the admittedly considerable improvement in the fluency of students during the time abroad is so clearly biased towards written-language forms, and why so little of the very widespread manner of speaking in spontaneous, colloquial situations is absorbed. It can surely be assumed that the students have experienced this typical spoken language, more precisely, this link between speech and situation, every day while abroad and that they also use this language form themselves in the familiar English situation.

A personal anecdote may provide some progress towards an answer here: some time ago I happened to see one of the Muppet Shows on television. The guest star on that occasion was an American film actor and comedian called James Coco. Before watching that particular show I had never heard of this man or seen him in films. I didn't know his work, I didn't know of his existence. Now all that has changed. After seeing him on the Muppet Show I seemed to notice his name on almost every film poster. He seemed to be in almost all the films on television and people seemed to write a lot about him in the newspapers. Suddenly, James Coco was everywhere.

It is obvious that since my reading habits and my life-style hadn't changed, I must have seen or heard James Coco's name mentioned, or even seen him in films, just as much **before** that Muppet Show. But why did he only register with me afterwards? Obviously, once I was aware of the name and the context in which to expect it, namely show business, I noticed it because I was prepared for it. As numerous experiments in the psychology of perception have confirmed, the perceptual threshold is lowest for meaningful and familiar material in known contexts. The less meaningful or the less familiar some visual or auditory input is, the longer it takes to be processed and consciously noticed. This is especially the case when a large number of inputs have to be processed simultaneously.

If this knowledge, which is fairly obvious but possibly underemployed, were to be applied to the learning of spoken German in Germany, there could surely be some prospect of bringing about an improvement. The students' stay abroad is relatively short, given that they have to come to terms with a new environment. They are bombarded by stimuli, i.e., inputs of all kinds from all sides. For example, they have to get used to living in new and foreign surroundings, they have to cope with new people and a new work or study situation, and they are submerged in a foreign language environment. Only a very small number of these new stimuli will be those relevant for improving spontaneous German speech. The chances of these spoken language inputs being noticed and retained in the memory are therefore rather slight, firstly, because they are in competition with a large number of other stimuli, and secondly, because they are relatively unfamiliar or indeed unknown -like James Coco before the Muppet Show - and have to compete with linguistic stimuli which are much more familiar to our students, i.e., those the students know to be relevant to the written language - and precisely those, in my opinion, which now contribute to the undoubted improvement in fluency mentioned earlier.

A contribution could surely be made to the survival of the genuine aspects of spontaneous speech in this 'battle of the stimuli' by making the students aware of those features of spoken German which are unfamiliar to them and which clearly serve to differentiate it from the written language. If the students' time abroad is to be rendered linguistically as productive as possible, then this preparation is surely an indispensable complement to what is generally accepted as the essential ingredient, i.e., adequate exposure to meaningful, natural language over a period of time, allowing development to take its natural course.

It should be self-evident that not all aspects of spontaneous spoken language are accessible to the observer to the same extent or lend themselves to exploitation in preparative or follow-up classes. It will be very difficult, for example, to analyse and deal theoretically with the complexities of spoken syntax, considering the limited time available. It will probably only be possible to make general reference to the chop and change approach when producing spoken language and to the many different types of incomplete sentences. It would obviously be nonsense to encourage students to practise quarter, half or three-quarter sentences in the language laboratory, in

conversation classes or subsequently during their time abroad, for example - that would make the teacher look like a syntactic Professor Higgins in reverse. What is important, however, is to point out that this somewhat erratic way of speaking is wide-spread and is understood because it is employed in a particular situation and is supplemented by that situation and is not poor or bad German. Many people who deal creatively and critically with the German language do not appreciate that spontaneous speech obeys different rules from those obeyed by the written language, and they would postulate that the written language is the ultimate standard. And perhaps this attitude also contributes to the inability of many students to accept and adopt the flexible and spontaneous characteristics of the spoken language.

The following example,[2] which is a translation from Swiss German, provides a good illustration of the interaction of situation and language. An examination of this 'conversation over coffee', its syntactic structures and the degree to which it is understandable, shows that its comprehensibility is in fact extremely minimal due to the numerous abbreviations and omissions of content and form. An explanation of the situation is required if the individual changes of subject are to be followed.

1 A You don't take sugar, do you - not when there are biscuits around.
2 B No, better not.
3 A That's what I thought. And what if there aren't any biscuits left ...
4 B Well then ...
5 A Then you do have sugar in coffee
6 B Yes.
7 A You see!
8 B Fantastic!
9 A It is, isn't it.
10 B Yes.
11 A I would be able to look after you too, if I had to.
12 C Is that your regiment. 22nd Infantry?
13 B Yes, oh, that drove me crazy - some stupid person came up with a camera, just as we arrived.
14 D Did he want to take a picture?
15 B Yes, just took a few pictures.
16 B Ooh! Oh dear!!
17 E Missed!
18 D Ooh!
19 A Hey, what are you up to?
20 C Quick, get a cloth! Or else get the dog up here.
21 A Yes, that's just we need, the dog on the table.
22 D That won't work.
23 A You're not getting any.
24 B No, that's no good.
25 E That's hopeless.

For a full understanding of the text we would have to know who the participants are and what relationships exist between them. For example, in order to understand the contribution of the word 'too' in line 11 we would have to know that B is A's son-in-'aw, and that A is quite fond of him; too therefore means: like your wife (C), my daughter. For an understanding of lines 12-15 we should know that C is looking at a local newspaper with photographs of a military parade in which B participated without too much enthusiasm. For an understanding of lines 16-19 we would have to know that B spilt some milk. For an understanding of lines 20 and 21 we would have to know that the dog has just started to lick the milk that went on the floor and would obviously do an equally good job on the table. And for an understanding of lines 22-25 we would have to know that B is trying to remove the spilt milk from the table with the aid of a spoon.

But it would be an exaggeration to claim that the syntax of the spoken language deviates totally from that of the written language and that speakers only seldom succeed in completing a sentence they have begun. On the contrary, the students can be shown examples which show that long-drawn-out sentences with many subordinate clauses can also play a part in spontaneous speech. The next example illustrates a sentence of this kind, which is very typical for the successive development of thoughts during speaking. The first thought stimulates the speaker to make further additions so that one thought merges organically into the next. A typical phenomenon in this example is how the development of a line of thought distracts from the formulation which doesn't quite come off.

Wir sind ja Fachschüler und haben dann andere Ferien als die Studenten
weil wir - weil die Fachschule sich umstellt auf den Rhythmus der anderen - der Gymnasien und der eben - der normalen Schule
damit die
die abgehen das eine Jahr Praktikum machen können und dann keinen Verlust haben
weil wir erst im März anfangen
oder zu wenig Praktikum haben
damit das ein guter Übergang ist
werden - stellen wir uns über - auch auf Ostern Weihnachten um.

In such situations it can also happen - and we are probably all familiar with this from our own experience - that the speaker cannot think of the final word or phrase at the end of a complicated utterance, and the missing elements are then supplied by the attentive listener. It often seems in these situations as if the listener has a greater lexical choice at his disposal than the speaker, who becomes 'bogged down' in his own formulation.

More typical than such a long-winded style, however, is the use of short sentences which are often incomplete and which are linked together in various ways to form an utterance, the commonest method of linkage being

coordination and by far the most predominantly used conjunction being und. The next example illustrates this. In this text the speaker is telling a friend how to get his car through the TÜV, the German equivalent of the British MOT.

> Das ist überhaupt kein Problem. Sie fahren rein, stellen Ihren Wagen ab **und** gehn in das Häuschen, wo die Kasse ist, **und** geben Ihren Kraftfahrzeugbrief ab **und** bezahlen zehn Mark. **Und dann** können Sie sich wieder in Ihren Wagen setzen **und** warten, bis Sie aufgerufen werden. **Und dann** kriegen Sie alles gesagt, Blinker raus, Fernlicht an **und** das andere Licht, ach, ganz automatisch. **Und dann** wird noch unten bißchen nachgeguckt, ob da nichts verrostet ist, der ganze Wagen in Ordnung ist, **und dann** kommt er rein zu Ihnen, der Prüfer, die sind sehr nett, fahren 'ne Ehrenrunde mit dem, **dann** kommen Sie wieder an der Kasse vorbei, kriegen Ihren Stempel druff, **und** alles ist erledigt. Fünf bis sieben Minuten, doch keine Arbeit **und** angenehm!

Apart from the typical coordination in this text characteristically incomplete sentences can also be observed: der ganze Wagen in Ordnung ist, fahren 'ne Ehrenrunde mit dem, kriegen Ihren Stempel druff, Fünf bis sieben Minuten, doch keine Arbeit, angenehm!

There are various possible extensions of und in spoken German, among them und nun, und zwar, und dann, und da, und nachher, und jedenfalls, und seitdem. Da, also da, and dann are sometimes used without und. Other coordinating conjunctions, however, such as aber, oder, denn, sondern are used considerably less frequently.

Subordination is somewhat more varied in form than coordination, although here, too, we find a particular favourite: the conjunction daß. In subordinate clauses we can observe a tendency towards retaining the word order of the main clause, with which we are most familiar, i.e. subject, predicate, object where there should really be inversion. This is presumably a sign of economy in the spoken language and is most successfully used in clauses beginning with weil. Man spricht heute so, weil man kennt es gar nicht mehr anders.

A justification for this may perhaps be seen in the fact that the conjunction denn has always required this word order: Man spricht heute so, denn man kennt es gar nicht mehr anders. But this justification is not necessary, since the trend is far more extensive. In relative clauses, for example: Ich habe meiner Mutter einen Brief geschrieben, der kam zurück. Es gibt Leute, die sprechen mit einer ganz komischen Wortstellung. This tendency to retain the preferred word order also leads to the conjunction daß being dispensed with after verbs and nouns of saying and thinking. Instead of saying: Er sagte, daß er um 7 Uhr kommen würde. people say: Er sagte, er kommt um 7. It should be mentiond that the subjunctive, obligatory for the written language, is also missing here. This word order can also be found in main clauses: Tatsächlich,

so sprechen wir heute. Freilich, das ist alles viel ökonomischer. Und sicher, das ist kein Unglück.

A typically differential aspect of spoken language which can be isolated and made accessible more easily for theoretical study than syntactic patterns is the wide-spread use of stereotype elements, of formulae and set phrases. These elements are independent of the factual content of an utterance and they are syntactically unconnected with it. Their main use is on the one hand to control the change-over from one speaker to another and on the other to structure the actual utterances of individual speakers. Because of this text-structuring function of the stereotype elements they can be called structuring signals. Without them, optimal communication could not be achieved. Structuring signals are most liberally employed in spontaneous dialogue situations and are almost totally absent in well-prepared monologues like public speeches or lectures.

The structuring signals may be taken as a uniform functional group, although traditional grammar categorizes them in many different ways: as short sentences, interjections, conjunctions and adverbs; there are also lexically undefinable items such as oh, ah, hm (sometimes called hesitation phenomena), as well as non-vocal features like gestures and mimicry.

In the spontaneous situation these elements are used in an attempt to interrupt the current speaker and to take over the role of speaker. The rules for this kind of take-over vary with the degree of spontaneity. In more formal situations the practice would be to wait until the current speaker has finished his or her utterance, or, at least, has completed one particular thought or point. In more spontaneous situations such considerations will play a less prominent part and the participants do not necessarily wait for a suitable and relevant place at which to interrupt.

Linguistic means to gain the role of speaker could firstly be very explicit phrases such as: ich wo'lte sagen, darf ich auch mal was sagen, wenn ich schnell mal unterbrechen darf, darf ich hier mal einhaken, ich würde meinen, ich meine, paß auf, ja hör mal, etc. English examples would be: can I just say something, can I just interrupt for a minute, can I just add something here, I would say, well I think, just a minute, yes but listen, etc.

Then there are individual lexical items like: ja, aber, also, ach, natürlich or various combinations of these. English uses yes, but, well, of course, anyway, well then, etc.

The next example illustrates the use of these signa's with which the listener tries to, or actually does, take over the role of speaker:

A **also** mir genügt die Formalität, daß es auf Papier steht, schön also gehört mir nun endlich ja? das genügt mir.
B **ja ... äh ... ja vielleicht aber ... äh ...** meiner
A ich brauch da nich noch großartig eine eine eine Bestätigung von vom

Pastor und so ...
B **nein paß mal auf ... gut ...**
A **äh ... daß sie ... daß sie** mir gehört ja? das das dazu brauch ...
B **ja ... äh ... ja also** die Frau gehört dir das is überhaupt mal die Frage ... also nach deiner vorigen ... äh ... Definition darf die dir die Frau gar nich gehören ...
A **ja ich meine ... ahm ... nein nein also ich versteh das nich.**

Further ways to gain the role of speaker that could be mentioned briefly here are repeatedly beginning with the same word or words while the current speaker is still talking, as was illustrated in the previous example, or the increased use of listener signals such as ja, nein, eben, gut; English right, yeah, no, fine. Also there is the possibility of breaking into the current speaker's speech and continuing or completing it for him.

This is an all too-familiar device employed by those who seem to know what we want to say better than we do ourselves. Paralinguistic means should be mentioned in this context, e.g., audible breathtaking, increased speech volume, i.e., greater loudness during simultaneous speaking with the current speaker and the use of hesitation phenomena äh, ahm, öh in brief gaps left by the current speaker. Lastly there are also non-vocal means that help us to take over the role of speaker, e.g., change in posture, in particular, moving closer to the current speaker, gestures, like the raising of a hand, nodding the head, opening the mouth.

Once the role of speaker has been taken over attempts will be made to retain it and prevent other participants from regaining it. Structuring signals within contributions to the dialogue can be of assistance here. They indicate to the other participants that the speaker has not finished his contribution yet and that he wants to remain in control. Often, these tactically-used signals within the contribution of individual speakers occur at those points in the text where a new section or aspect as regards content begins; where a new subject or a new aspect of the subject is brought into the discussion, or something is to receive particular emphasis. It could therefore be said that the use of structuring signals within a section of the dialogue is motivated by tactical as well as semantic considerations. These signals can occur in the form of explicit sentences and phrases such as: laß mich mal ausreden, würdest du bitte nicht unterbrechen, darf ich das noch schnell zu Ende führen, einen Moment bitte, und noch folgendes, ja und da ist/wäre/war noch folgendes, und dann, außerdem meine ich, etc. English examples would be: just let me finish, can I just finish, I've just got one more thing to say, please don't interrupt, there's just one more thing, one more thing, and then, apart from that there's, if I could just add, etc.

The next example illustrates the use of this type of structuring signal. The example is taken from a school-class discussion with Günter Grass. We can see how one of the pupils develops his own thoughts on the subject under discussion and puts them together step by step with the help of such signals.

Herr Grass, bei Ihrem Inhalt da kommen drei Sachen vor **und das eine** ist ... äh ... die Beschreibung von ekelhaften Dingen die Beschreibung von sexuellen Dingen und ... äh ... das is n alter Hut **und jetzt kommt** man vielleicht was Neueres ... äh ... Sie bringen auch sehr viel Blasphemie rein ... **und da hab ich** ... äh ... jetzt ein Beispiel ... da beschreiben Sie wie ein paar ... äh ... Möwenmist kauen **und dazu** schreiben sie das Zeug schmeckte nach nichts oder nach Gips oder nach Fischmehl oder nach allem was er sich vorstellte nach Glück Mädchen und nach dem lieben Gott **und diese Stelle** nach dem lieben Gott **möcht ich besonders betonen ... also** nach Mädchen und Glück könnte man sich eventuell noch drüber streiten aber ... äh ... **aber hier** seit wann kann wie wieso kann Möwenmist nach dem lieben Gott schmecken?

An important way to remain in control and also to structure one's own speech is the use of paralinguistic means, in particular hesitation phenomena during gaps in the current utterance. It is well known that unfilled intervals of sufficient length are the points where another participant could come in and take over the role of speaker. Apart from the explicit linguistic elements employed in the previous example, the speaker therefore uses paralinguistic fillers in order to signal to the other participants that he is still in control and does not want to be interrupted, and also to help in the organisation of his utterance.

The type of paralinguistic filler and the actual number used vary from one speaker to another, and more importantly for language teaching, from language to language. The paralinguistic features used in English are different from those used in German. It is also open to question whether the hesitation phenomena occur **after** the speaker has made a decision about the syntactic structure of his thoughts and **before** their actual lexical realisation, as often seems to be the case in English. The use of English-type hesitation phenomena in an otherwise faultless German utterence would be non-idiomatic and would betray the fact that the speaker is a foreigner. It follows that students should be aware not only of the **linguistic** but also of the paralinguistic complexities of spontaneous language.

It is probably fair to say that foreign-language teachers do not spend much time on the paralinguistics of their foreign languages, always in the hope that the time abroad will do the trick. Experience shows that this is not good enough, because few students manage to distance themselves paralinguistically from their native English behaviour. A comparative analysis of paralinguistic aspects in English and in the foreign language could help the students to identify the foreign speaker's speech behaviour and to copy him more successfully; it could also help them to improve their dialogue strategies in the foreign language and make them into more competent conversationalists.

Apart from preventing interruptions, introducing new ideas and generally structuring the speech event, structuring signals are also used to carry out self-correction, as is shown in the next example:

Ja, nun liegen die Sachen ja Gott **äh mm** leider Gottes so n bißchen eng beieinander. Aber es ist so - wir stel'en uns **also** wir haben festgestellt, daß wir uns alle immer die Frage stellen: ja, warum soll es nicht anders rum sein?

In line 1, a paralinguistic signal is used to stop and re-start the utterance after the defective realization of the idiomatic phrase leider Gottes. In line 2 the sentence wir stellen uns die Frage is cut short after uns and rephrased with the linguistic signal also as its starter.

Structuring signals are not only used by the speaker but also by the listener, who can indicate with their aid his attention and interest, or lack of them, as well as his agreement or disagreement. The listener can therefore structure the utterance he hears step by step by means of paralinguistic and linguistic symbols in the way that the speaker can. After every new piece of information there can be a listener signal, which structures what is said and gives the speaker the important information that what he says is being received and understood. This feedback information is absolutely vital. It can be very irritating for a speaker, at the very least, if the listener does not cooperate in this way - for whatever reason. By the denial of these signals of confirmation on the part of the listener, the conversation can rapidly dry up, and on the telephone, where these signals are even more important, because of the lack of visual contact, the speaker would ask after only a very short time if the listener can still hear him.

The structuring signals discussed so far all occurred at the beginning of an utterance, or, at least, at the beginning of a section of an utterance. They could therefore be called beginning or opening signals. There are also signals which occur at the end of utterances or parts of utterances and these could be called concluding or closing signals. One function of these signals, which, incidentally, are not used quite as frequently and regularly in German as the opening signals, is to signal the conclusion of individual statements and thereby to divide the whole utterance into sense units. This is perhaps comparable, to a certain extent, with punctuation in the written language. At the same time these closing signals - especially ja and nicht - are used to establish common ground between speaker and listener, both emotionally and factually. With their aid the speaker constantly checks and monitors that the listener is still paying attention, that he understands him and agrees or disagrees with him. The speaker seeks confirmation of what he is saying and attempts to guard against any objections that may be made by anticipating them so that he can challenge them immediately. It is of some sociolinguistic importance that this function of language occurs most frequently among speakers who are uncertain about the adequacy of what they are saying and feel the need to have the constant agreement of the listener. This last point is particularly clearly illustrated in the next example - the speech of a shipyard worker from Hamburg.

Och Gott, hat ja kein Zweck, **nicht,** kannst ja bei der Politik kannst

sowieso nichts machen, **nicht**, und Hamburg ist 'ne Weltstadt, **nicht**, Hauptsache, der Hafen läuft, **nicht**. Damit wir was zu tun haben, **nicht**, daß man existenzfähig ist, **nicht**. Kommst du abends nach Hause, Mutti wartet denn auch, hast 'n paar Bier getrunken, **nicht**, denn fängt sie das Schimpfen an - noja, bringt man 'n paar Blumen mit, **nicht**, und denn hat sich das wieder, **nicht**. Ist wieder alles vergessen, **nicht**. Jo.

Of course, not all conversations are subdivided by such frequent use of structuring signals as the examples that have been discussed. Very controlled speakers - due perhaps to the situation or possibly to individual linguistic discipline - can manage with very few of these signals, or sometimes even do without them altogether. People obviously speak differently in different situations and are more careful how they express themselves when speaking to certain listeners.

In such situations their speech contains fewer redundant features and thus fewer structuring signals. On the other hand, in less formal situations in which the speaker is more committed to the content of what he is saying, spontaneity, lack of control and redundancy of linguistic expression are all increased. Self-correction and restarted sentences are more frequent because of the difficulty experienced with formulation; as a result more stereotype repetitions and meaningless structuring signals are used.

The function of these redundant forms, the structuring signals, in spoken communication is determined by the unique nature of the spoken text. The written text can be re-read, we can turn back at any time and check how the writer has expressed himself. Not so with the spoken language. Without structuring signals the spoken text would represent an almost unbroken continuum, especially in the case of lively speakers, and would demand the listener's constant and undivided attention. This is very difficult to maintain, because outward interference and inward parallel thinking usually distract part of the listener's attention. Signals of confirmation from the listener let the speaker know that what he has said has been understood. Structuring signals, which subdivide dialogues and monologues in their characteristic way, make it easier for the listener to follow what is being said. The fact that these signals are redundant does not matter. Since the danger of information losses in spoken communication is much greater, the redundancy has to be far more frequent.

Redundancy in genuine spontaneous speech is further increased by repetition; the repetition of words, parts of sentences or even whole sentences in a slightly modified form. And it is not necessary for the unit which is repeated to represent the central topic or to be of particularly great semantic importance, as is made clear in the next example, an excerpt from a sermon, by the repetition of the word Geschichte.

Die **Geschichte** wird uns einmal ausgeführt in einer anderen **Geschichte** - wißt ihr zufällig in welcher **Geschichte** wo der Mensch Gott gleich

sein wollte? Im Turmbau zu Babel und bitte lesen Sie die **Geschichte** mal und denken Sie mal an die **Geschichte** unseres deutschen Volkes, des großdeutschen Reiches vor 30 Jahren.

The next example illustrates the repetition of whole sentences:

Und dann stehn die beiden so am Schiff und **dann nimmt der eine dem andern seine Mütze vom Kopf und schmeißt sie ins Wasser.** Was macht der andre **der nimmt dem seine Mütze vom Kopf und schmeißt sie auch ins Wasser.** Die beiden gucken sich an da sagt der andre hol die Mütze wieder raus sonst gibt es ein Unglück. Und faßt ihn bei den Beinen mit dem Kopf ins Wasser und er **muß die Mütze wieder rausholen.** Nun haben sie beide Mützen wieder heraus setzen sie sich auf den Kopf nun natürlich total naß das Wasser läuft ihnen an'n Ohren hinunter. Und dasselbe passiert nochmal wieder. Und **da nimmt der eine die Mütze und wirft sie** weit weg in die Elbe hinein und **der andere nimmt dann dem andern seine Mütze und** ebenfalls.

The frequent use of recurrent units in speaking is in marked contrast to the usages of the written language. There, the obligation to vary and the reluctance to repeat constitute one of the first commandments. This is already emphasized so strongly in essay-writing lessons at school that hardly anyone writing in later life can exempt himself from it. Instead of continuously saying: er sagte, er sagte, we write er begann, er sprach, er redete, er erwiderte, er stotterte, er plauderte, er lispelte, er tuschelte, and so on. In the case of other word clauses, the same variation approach applies, or we often use deictic pronouns to refer to them.

The frequent use of recurrent units in spontaneous speech facilitates both speaking and listening. Instead of continually having to seek new variations, the speaker can concentrate on his thoughts and in translating them into language he can employ the same formulation for dealing with the same or very similar subject matter. Due to the recurrent units the spoken language gains considerably in length and these units contribute to a large extent towards the redundancy of speaking. Both factors seem to be an advantage for the listener: he can stay 'on the ball' even without paying very much attention.

With reference to redundancy mention should be made of the empty phrases and standard formulae which are employed in such great numbers in spontaneous speech, and whose use is often not satisfactorily mastered, even by advanced speakers. These phrases serve to slow down the rate of information flow and ensure the speaker some time in which decisions can be taken during the process of thinking and formulating. Examples are:

glaub' ich, würd' ich sagen, sagen wir mal, wie man sagt, wie wir so

sagen, wie man so schön sagt, ehrlich gesagt, auf gut Deutsch gesagt, ich meine, mein' ich doch, und so weiter, oder sowas, oder so, na kurz und gut, wie das so ist, wie heißt das jetzt, etc.

English would use expressions like: so to speak, sort of, kind of, like, to put it another way, in other words, how shall I say, to put it in plain English, quite frankly, etc. It is typical that some speakers - very much to the annoyance of other participants in the conversation - often have favourite phrases which they are fond of using frequently. However, among the above examples there are a number of expressions which go beyond individual usage.

From redundancy in the form of recurrent units and empty phrases it is only a small step to well-worn clichés and trendy expressions. Examples are:

muß ja nicht sein, wenn man so will, schlapp machen, den Segen haben, von wegen, und ob, na und, alles was recht ist, daß ich nicht lache, was soll's, wird schon werden, das darf doch nicht wahr sein, etc.

English examples would be:

we'll see, didn't I half, it'll turn out alright in the end, que sera sera, you don't say, you must be joking, pull the other one, that's just it, at the end of the day, you've got another think coming, etc.

It can be seen again here that certain clichés are favoured by individual speakers, while others are used more generally. The question, too, of whether an expression is in fact fixed and has become a cliché which intrudes almost unintentionally into their speech, will be answered differently by different speakers.

The discussion of clichés and trendy expressions approaches the general area of slang. The spoken German language is particularly creative in this area and is constantly producing new material. Such material is all the more interesting for advanced language teaching because it is typical for the language spoken by the German contemporaries and friends of the majority of students. Without some knowledge of the patterns of slang formation there could therefore be some difficulties in comprehension and in assessment of the nature of certain conversations. The following list gives a series of currently used slang expressions in a number of selected semantic areas:

Semantic area	Slangy expressions currently in use
das ist gut ausgezeichnet, toll	das ist: grell, fetzig, fetzend, prickelnd, ätzend, tierisch, tierisch gut, geil, supergeil, affengeil, oberaffengeil, irre, stark, echt stark, hart, das ist die Härte,

	das ist glatter Wahnsinn das kommt gut hier ist die Molly los
gute Musik	geile Lala, geile Musi
ich habe Lust auf	ich habe Bock auf ich hab' jetzt echt Böcke auf ich habe Trieb auf
ich habe keine Lust	ich hab' jetzt kein'n Bock auf ich hab' Nullbock ich habe keinen Druck auf der Materie das is echt ungeil
hier ist nichts los	hier ist der Arsch ab hier ist der Arsch verfroren das is 'ne tote Hose
geh weg, hau ab	zieh Leine, verpiß dich, kneif' ab, verzieh dich, mach Mücke mach Flatter mach Rakete mach Abflug
ich glaub' ich spinne	da schnallst de ab (ältere Form) da packst de dich in die Hose ich glaub' mein Schwein pfeift ich glaub' mein Hamster bohnert ich glaub' mich streift'n Bus ich glaub' mich knutscht'n Elch ich glaub' die Russen kommen da kriegst du se nich mehr alle ich glaub's geht los
ich glaub' du	ich glaube du hast 'n Dachschaden (ältere spinnst Form) ich glaube du hast 'ne Schraube locker (ältere Form) Ich glaube du hast nicht mehr alle Tassen im Schrank (ältere Form) ich glaube du hast den Schoß offen ich glaube du hast ein Loch in der Pupille ich glaube du hast einen Knick in der Antenne ich glaube du hast einen Riß im Giebel ich glaube dich hamse gebissen ich glaub dir hamse Sand ins Hirn gestreut hasse macke? haste Rad ab? ich glaub' du hast n Ratsch ab

As can be seen immediately from this list, it is characteristic here that these expressions can be far-fetched and sometimes provocative. This is typical of

young people who are protesting not only against social boredom, but also against linguistic monotony. They operate with images where ordinary language only uses straightforward symbols. However, it is often the case that the unusual aspects of this type of language are relatively quickly worn out, so that they become clichés. This is no different than with fashion, because if something is fashionable it is shown off everywhere and at every opportunity - and precisely because of this, it is very rapidly out of fashion again and new creations must be thought of to replace it.

In general, it can be said that clichés in spontaneous speech fulfil a similar function to that of the recurrent units: they are ready to be called upon and save the speaker having to think of the appropriate word for a particular position in a sentence. Unconscious linguistic economy is thus at work again here. The semantic imprecision associated with the cliché is unimportant, since the listener and speaker from the same linguistic background will interpret it in the same way.

There are a large number of further typical aspects of spontaneous speech, which could be introduced in class as material to sharpen the students' awareness of such features and to promote increased use of them in actual conversations. It is particularly useful to refer to the frequent use of the modal particles which serve to differentiate the spoken language from the written one with such clarity, and which gain additional relevance in that no English particles can be found which are the same as the German ones or which have a similar semantic and pragmatic structure.

Examples of German modal particles are: aber, ja, vielleicht, nur, bloß, doch, eben, auch, denn, eigentlich, etwa, mal, schon, nun. It is typical of these little words that when they are used as modal particles, they do not have any definable meaning of their own, they do no contribute anything to the factual content of a sentence and can therefore be omitted without any change in the truth value of the sentence. The modal particles do not clarify what the speaker says, but why he says it, how he feels about the content of his utterances, how much he presumes is already known about the subject under discussion, how he wants to influence the listener, and so on. The following three sentences, for example, show how the speaker anticipates the reaction of the listener with the aid of the modal particles and makes clear which reaction he would prefer:

Verwendest du Modalpartikeln? (reaction not specified)
Verwendest du **auch** Modalpartikeln? (positive reaction expected)
Verwendest du **etwa** Modalpartikeln? (negative reation expected)

It is a typical phenomenon in the case of the modal particles in spontaneous language that they are used in combination. Mach ruhig das Fenster zu! can become Mach eben vielleicht schon mal ruhig das Fenster zu! It is not always easy to say to what extent different possib'e particle combinations modify the nuances of meaning of an utterance. Certainly, accent, intonation and

position of the particle in the sentence all play important parts. However, it can be said overall that the use of the modal particles and, especially, of a whole succession of them also makes a typical contribution to redundancy in the spoken language.

One of the many functions of German modal particles is to express the speaker's wish to be in agreement with the listener. A certain amount of agreement, or, at least, common interest are essential for a productive exchange of view between speaker and listener. Without at least partially coinciding views it is not possible for us to converse. Because of this, the speaker is always concerned to stress common interests and to produce agreement, or to make sure that these exist.

The modal particle ja in the next three examples is used either to refer to a known fact or to present the content of an utterance as a known fact. The speaker assumes that a particular set of facts is known to or is obvious to the listener but explicitly mentions them to ensure that they have not been forgotten, since they are essential to the continuation of the communication; something that is required for the present argumentation is recalled to mind. English has to resort to explicit means to render the meaning of German ja and literally spells out what its contribution is.

Ich schick' Dir das Geld an Deine Geschäftsadresse. Die hab' ich ja.

I'll send the money to your business address. I've got it, **you know**

Lieb von Dir, daß Du mir hilfst. Du siehst ja, ich kann mit der rechten Hand überhaupt nicht.

Nice of you to help me. **As you see,** I can't do anything with my right hand.

Stimmt, der Fernseher war schon teuer. Aber weißt du, wir gehen ja nie aus.

You're right, the television was rather expensive; but then, we never go out, **you know.**

Mentioning known facts seems to be very widespread. People use non-informative sentences for mutually informing each other of known facts and to call attention to the obvious. Stating the self-evident seems to have the function of reassuring the participants of the unproblematic aspects of their mutual relationship.

Modal particles are also used to express surprise as is illustrated in the next two examples by the use of denn.

A Komm, ich fahr' dich heim.

B Hast du **denn** einen Führerschein?

A Come on, **I'll** drive you home.

B **You mean to say** you've got a driving licence?
I didn't know you'd got a driving licence.

A Diese Unfallrechnung macht mir schwer zu schaffen.

B Wieso? Bist du **denn** nicht versichert?

A The bill for this accident is making things very difficult for me.

B Why's that? Haven't you got an insurance?

.....? **Don't tell me** you're not insured!
.....? **Don't say** you haven't got an insurance.
.....? **You mean to say** you're not insured?

The surprise expressed in these sentences is based on a discrepancy between a certain expectation and the facts deduced from the situation or from the previous sentence. In the first of the two situations, for example, the original assumption is that A does not possess a driving licence. From what A says, however, it must seem that he either does possess a licence, or, of course, that he intends to drive illegally. In English this kind of surprise is expressed by introductory phrases like: don't say, I didn't know, don't tell me and by very pronounced intonation, that uses a wide pitch range.

The last examples in this analysis show how a modal particle is used to tone down an utterance, to lessen the impact of a statement.

A Zehn Gramm Schinken?

B Ja bitte. Aber es kann **ruhig** etwas mehr sein.

A Ten grams of bacon?

B Yes please, but **it doesn't really matter** if it's a bit more.
Yes please, but **it's alright** if it's over.

Die Heringe könnten **ruhig** etwas pikanter gewürzt sein.

It wouldn't do any harm if the herrings were a bit more highly seasoned.
A bit more seasoning **wouldn't do** the herrings any harm.

By the use of the modal particle ruhig the speaker can imply that there is no reason to worry about a particular action, that there is nothing to prevent a certain action, that it wouldn't really matter if things were slightly different from the way they are at the moment. Apart from relying on the versatile

function of intonation, English makes very explicit what the German particle stands for by using phrases like doesn't really matter, it's alright, it wouldn't do any harm.

Obviously, many more examples could be given to show how modal particles can be used by the German speaker to express his attitudes, his feelings and emotions. However, the above is sufficient to illustrate what kind of material can be presented to students and in what way the function of the modal particles in spoken German, together with their English counterparts can be discussed.

It seems absolutely essential that students receive more intensified instruction in the use of the modal particles in spoken German. If they are to speak appropriately in a given situation, they require knowledge about how the speaker correctly expresses his own attitude towards that situation and his expectations of it. This becomes clear if one imagines a situation in which somebody politely invites a visitor standing outside the door to come in, not with the words: Komm ruhig rein! but with the words: Komm bloß rein! The ability to use modes of expression revealing the attitude of the speaker is an essential part of the communicative competence of the native speaker, and must therefore also be the aim of those foreign speakers who wish to imitate this competence as closely as possible.

In the language learning context one important prerequisite for the successful imitation of the native speaker is full awareness of his linguistic behaviour and, if possible, its analysis. This applies to the spoken language as a whole. Because of the relatively advanced age of students for language acquisition, because of the relatively short time spent abroad and because of the interference from the written language, it is probably unlikely in many cases, that the linguistic immersion abroad will achieve near-native spoken competence.

We know from own experience that in conversation it is only seldom possible, and then for only short periods, that we are successful in observing the linguistic peculiarities and the conversational techniques of the other participants. If we were to do this we should be bad conversationalists and could probably expect to be called to order continuously for not paying attention, and not following the topic under discussion, but, instead, concentrating on the structure of what was being said. This state of affairs justifies conscious and analytical study of special aspects of the spoken language.

A thorough knowledge of such selected linguistic phenomena as were discussed in this paper could form a significant contribution to the achievement of communicative competence, and, because this increases the awareness of certain aspects of spoken German, periods spent by students in German-speaking countries could be made considerably more productive as far as learning the language is concerned. In this way it might be ensured that students can meet the changing social and industrial requirements of the present day, where the spoken language is becoming increasingly important.

However, apart from the practical benefits which can be obtained from such analytical study there is another, not unimportant advantage in it, which has application to the understanding of the present-day German language as a whole. Research on the German language has shown that the written German language is nowadays influenced by the colloquial language to an extent which was previously unknown. Even if not all the characteristics of the present linguistic changes can be explained by concessions to the colloquial language, these do play an essential part. According to Hans Eggers this is manifested syntactically in a tendency towards shorter sentences, towards simple sentences, towards coordination; on the lexical side we find many colloquialisms and expressions from everyday speech; particles are widely used; one particular morphological feature to be observed is the use of prepositional phrases, which is also typical for English, and, in conjunction with this, a certain amount of reduction in the use of cases.

In view of these already many-sided influences on the written language it could perhaps be suggested that in order to understand it fully, much closer study of the spoken language will be essential in the future. Then the spoken language would receive the amount of attention it really deserves.

NOTES

1. For more on this see: Christel Leska, Vergleichende Untersuchungen zur Frequenz und Distribution syntaktischer Erscheinungen gesprochener und geschriebener Sprache - durchgeführt an Texten deutscher Gebrauchssprache der Gegenwart, Dissertation (Leipzig, 1966).

2. The examples given are based on the following:

   Ausdrucksweisen der Sprechereinstellung im Deutschen und Englischen by Wolfram Bublitz (Tübingen, 1978).

   Texte gesprochener deutscher Standardsprache, erarbeitet im Institut für deutsche Sprache (München/Düsseldorf)

   Zu einer Typologie des spontanen Gesprächs by Heinz Zimmermann (Bern, 1965).

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TOWARDS A PEDAGOGIC THEORY OF INTERPRETING: LEARNING TO INTERPRET, OR INTERPRETING TO LEARN?

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I INTRODUCTION

'Vox et praeterea nihil'.[1] If Latin were still the language of epitaphs, instead of itself having been consigned to the grave, these words might constitute the perfect memorial to the accomplished interpreter - 'a voice and nothing more'. For such faint praise, far from damning its recipient, would testify to his attainment of that most desirable, most elusive quality in an interpreter - unobtrusiveness. To be good enough not to be noticed - that, for the interpreter, is achievement.[2] Indeed, the accomplished interpreter is one to whom otherwise English words with the prefix 'inter-' (connoting, as they do, a perceived third presence) cannot reasonably be applied. 'Vox et praeterea nihil': for the interpreter, an epitaph - indeed, an epitome - devoutly to be wished.

At this point there are four questions which the Devil's advocate, ever vying for the souls of the interred (not itself connoting a third presence, even unperceived!) might pose:

(i) Surely we are not concerned with dead interpreters? 'No,' we reply, 'but the antecedents go back a long way: interpreters did not spring fully grown from the head of Robbins, equipped for battle and uttering their war-cries, like Athena from the head of Zeus (one instance when Olympian axing proved creative).'

(ii) Surely we are not concerned with 'dead' languages? 'No,' we again reply, 'for better or worse we take your point - but not the dichotomy it implies.'

(iii) Why teach interpreting to anyone? 'That,' we begin, 'is not the negative question you deem it' - but, before we can say more, there comes a more Devil-ish aphorism.

(iv) 'A voice and nothing more'. Doesn't that sum up modern linguists as a species? They talk, but have nothing to say! 'Wrong again,' we might well riposte. 'The Greeks had a word for it - in the beginning was the Logos, meaning not only 'utterance', but 'reason'...'

Thus far the 'Plutonic' dialogue. But to each answer to our infernal questioner we might add - 'We shall have more to say - below'. And it would seem that the case for interpreting, as for oral and aural skills, is in today's circumstances intrinsically connected with the case for modern languages themselves. Our concern is with the 'educated linguist'.

II CONTINUUM AND COMMUNITY

Allusions to civilisations, cultures, even languages, that are not our specialism ought not to leave us modern linguists cold. Such narrowness is the besetting danger of academic life, unworthy of the 'totality' and 'singleness of purpose' which university - in etymology and conception - primarily denotes. Dichotomies serve analysis, not perspective.

Perspective is paramount, both for a right valuation of languages in educational policy,[3] and for instilling them effectively as 'langues vivantes'. Yet the constant, if ill-defined, classification 'modern' - with its implied antithesis - suggests an inherent limit to the perspective and purview of our discipline, a fallacy that has too long been allowed to subordinate it to others. The dichotomy in the diachronic spectrum of language is, like all dichotomies, artificial: it goes some way to account for the weak influence attributed to, and exerted by, languages in our educational traditions and practice. Within the context of the twentieth century, it is as if some malign arbiter had decreed for languages a policy of 'divide - and overrule'. Languages - be they 'modern' or 'unmodern' - constitute a continuum, and our perspective and perceptions are weakened if we ignore the fact. The antithesis implicit in the misleading, if not misplaced, epithet 'modern' is as specious as the argument that 'unmodern' languages foster better English. A sensitive command of English should be the priority, and ultimately the mark, of all educated linguists - be they students of languages 'old' or 'new' - and certainly of those claiming performative skills. Indeed, as between ancient and modern languages, there should be in this respect no demarcation or 'rivals' - and certainly no Sheridan to complain: 'Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood ...'[4]
The preferable generic for all concerned with language is 'linguist', devoid of epithet - permitting, though not lightly admitting, limitation. Unified if by nothing else, then at least by our concern for English, we linguists note that 1984 is no year of disgrace for the much misrepresented Orwell. What he has to say about English[5] merits no less attention than his more familiar theme. Indeed, research has been profitably directed to his language concerns.[6] How ironical for us that Orwell is commonly adjudged 'difficult to interpret'! We sympathise with his aversion to 'duckspeak', or to pidgin command of any language. Adding to Orwell the vision of a master lexicographer,[7] a respectful parody well summarises that common cause - at this stage in our discussion:

> Let Education with extensive view
> Survey the scene from Oldspeak to the New ...

In this era of communications, awareness of language as a continuum can only help society realise its inability to communicate, and thus enhance linguists' potential contribution to man's future. Similarly, as those of us concerned with the performance of language focus our attention on 'language as communication' - i.e. as the means to community - we can the more effectively promote it by recognising that area of language, and language-

teaching, in which we specialise as part of the one language-continuum, diachronic and synchronic. The reasoning here is not eschatological. It is not merely the case that man must - for survival - communicate; it is in his nature to do so. He is, as Aristotle (when accurately rendered) observed, 'a community being.'[8]

III ORAL SKILLS IN DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

We do well, in the circumstances of modern life, and in our promotion of language-skills in education, to recall the priority given in Greece (the mainspring of those cultures we mostly profess) to mastery of the spoken word. Five centuries before Aristotle, long before the use of writing, it was by word of mouth alone that Homer first sowed the seeds of the Greek ideals we unconsciously continue: his was indeed a 'blooming' lyre. No student ever merited a better reference than the palpably mortal, yet articulate, Achilles - whose mentor, according to Homer, saw his role as - 'to make thee a doer of deeds, and a master too of speech.'[9] Indeed, these priorities are in reverse order in the original Greek - rightly suggesting that had Achilles sought his ultimate defence in words, not weapons, the 'quick' heel might have been lost to the field of metaphor, if not to other fields. That ideal retains its relevance, and its priority, today.

Surely the ancient world gives the lie irrefutably to the view that intellectual depth and linguistic skills cannot be pursued simultaneously. The thinkers, dramatists, and moulders of democracy in Greece made their lasting contribution to civilisation through the spoken word - and their contemporaries' skill at listening. Education in both Greece and Rome was nothing if not the training to speak. It was quite as much for that reason, as for benefits to written style, that classical - rather than other - languages so long dominated our educational practice. For both Greeks and Romans the training of tongue, mind, and character were integrally related: the persuasive Demosthenes disciplined his diction with pebbles in his mouth - though that was not itself the reason that as late as the seventeenth century speakers trained on Greek felt greatness was just a stone's throw away.

We should note, too, that amid this 'oral' educational tradition Romans were brought up for seven centuries bilingually, by foreign native-speakers. We perhaps have something to learn from this valuation of the native teacher's potential. All the great Roman orators were trained by Greeks, and chairs of rhetoric - which meant primarily mastery of the spoken word - were endowed in every important city. Such was the primacy of language in education. Thus were ideas fostered and civilisation spread.

It was this same oral propagation of ideas and influence that bred the first **interpreters** - as the word's classical pedigree suggests. Small wonder it is Latin. For despite their subtlety and eloquence, the Greeks were conscious monoglots (hence, perhaps, their apotheosis in English education), unable to understand their own immigrant police (from south Russia!) and pedagogues: indeed, whether as cause or effect, the Greek language - for all its refinement - was remarkably inadequate to discuss problems of translation.

Perhaps for this reason the Greek historian Herodotus is lost in wonder at Egypt's interpreters, numerous and valued enough in that hierarchic, seven-tiered society to be in a class of their own - albeit sixth, hence just above the vulgar 'boatmen'.[10] The Romans, being better linguists, took interpreters for granted. It was the negotiating of an early 'treaty of Rome' that prompted Caesar, confronted even then with an intractable French leader, to 'remove the ordinary interpreters and speak through a friend in whom he had complete confidence'.[11] Early evidence, in turn, for the view that interpreting is essentially creative!

There is purpose in this retrospect. We see that oral skills are no new priority in education, and that the ideas and creativeness of two formative cultures were not inhibited by conscious pursuit of them, even in an emphatically bilingual context. Moreover, but for the artificial dichotomy between 'classical' and 'modern' cultures, we might not now - at the end of the second millenium AD - be still persuading both ourselves and others that foreign languages are to be spoken as well as studied; that education is the 'bringing out' of communicative potential; and that **the linguist's bridge-building is as crucial as the engineer's.** The Romans did both. Indeed, the Romans' maxim - 'rem tene, verba sequentur'[12] ('stick to your subject and the words will follow') - takes on added significance in view of their linguistic abilities, and should epitomise the aspiration of the educated linguist today, as in any age. No less evident is the point that language - particularly, oral communication - is a bastion of received culture, not (as its detractors might allege) a bastard of modernity, in the sphere of higher education.

IV INTERPRETING - THE ACT OF MEANING, AND THE MEANING OF THE ACT

Against this background, only cursorily sketched, of antecedents too often ignored or at least misunderstood, we can with greater perspective and, hence, purpose assess and argue the 'extensive view' that **interpreting within language-studies** shares with **language-studies within education.** Both bring a width of vision and a depth of insight, derived both from learning and experience, to bear upon their respective macrocosms.
To come to terms with interpreting, let us come to interpreting with terms better defined. Indeed, a major purpose of this paper is to define, to delimit what previously was ill-defined - hence unnecessarily elusive for both teachers and taught.

We spoke of Orwell as 'difficult to interpret'. It goes without saying that interpretation in that sense - i.e. **literary interpretation** - is not in the least the same as **linguistic (i.e. oral) interpretation.** Put simply, both require total understanding if they are to be effective, but linguistic interpretation entails complete re-creation of the original 'text', whereas literary interpretation is selective and much more subjective. The intellectual demands of oral interpretation - not least, in endeavouring to get into the mind of the speaker, indeed to identify with that other personality, and in sure judgment of allusions - are no less than those of literary interpretation.

But clearly these uses of the word 'interpretation' serve only to highlight the semantic, even the terminological, problems with which linguistic discussion is notoriously fraught. Suffice it to say - though unfortunately it does need saying - the linguistic interpreter, while indeed a performer and participant in a speech 'act', is not a dragoman.

Nor, furthermore, is interpreting to be identified with translating - a point, while again familiar, that bears reiteration. It has been as cogently argued by Professor Danica Seleskovitch[13] (of ESIT, Paris) as by anyone. Only the Slav nations have valid lexical defence for conflating the two activities, though ancillary adjectives and adverbs ensure they rarely do. The distinction must be clear in any language. **Interpreting** is the complete **oral** rendering of an **oral** text (a statement, speech or dialogue) into another language, whereas **translating** is the complete rendering (usually, written) of a **written** text into another language. It may be said that translators read between the lines, but interpreters between the words. But neither activity, strictly speaking, is concerned to summarise or edit.

In the professional context the challenge to the interpreter is threefold:

(i) Semantic - to convey the content of the utterance with total accuracy;
(ii) Stylistic - to retain the mood and nuance of the utterance;
(iii) Social - to have no adverse effect on the atmosphere of the occasion (a crucial consideration).

These are daunting, but exhilarating, challenges. Curiously, when one is interpreting, they inspire rather than depress: each new utterance is at first sensed as an opportunity to do well, and thereafter as an opportunity to do better. Once one 'has the bit between one's teeth' as an interpreter (if the image can be allowed!), one does not think - indeed, one has no time to think - of 'challenges', 'problems', and other manifestations of introspection. The adrenalin flows. One is, after all, in an 'inter-personal' situation. It is the most natural human response to speak when spoken to, and to wish not to keep the hearer waiting. One responds, indeed, to the **personalities** around one (both in consecutive and simultaneous modes) - or, at least, visible from the booth (in simultaneous mode) - and, in so doing, one is often surprised by one's own personality and the resources it evinces (resources which, in other contexts of life, may never emerge or even be called upon). Interpreting 'for real' is indeed an 'e-ducation', a 'bringing out'. Thus it is in two senses 're-creation' (both of the personality and of the text), and at best - at one's performative best - it is recreation.

But, for all these considerations of personality (and a fuller discussion will come in the paper by John Henderson, 'Language performance, context and the personality of the interpreter'), the interpreter is not - and should not be - a 'prima donna'. The interpreter's satisfaction -and it is intense - comes retrospectively, and from three unspectacular things:

(i) creating understanding;
(ii) having a clear conscience;
(iii) not attracting attention.

Renée Van Hoof succinctly and graphically summarises the qualities indispensable to the effective interpreter as follows:

> C'est, pour employer une expression allemande, un 'Einfühlungsvermögen' - autrement dit, la capacité et l'aptitude de se mettre dans la peau d'autrui. Dire ce que l'orateur dit, au besoin mieux qu'il ne le dit, mais pas autrement, sans ajouter son grain de sel. Pour cela, il faut avant tout pouvoir et savoir écouter les autres attentivement - une distraction (ne fût-ce que de quelques secondes) peut être fatale - les comprendre et rendre leur pensée fidèlement. De plus - mais cela va sans dire - l'interprète doit être discret.[14]

The most indispensable quality, of course, is a sensitive and resourceful command of language - not least, one's own. Marshak (who, inter alia, translated the whole of Robert Burns into Russian) aptly reminds the interpreter/translator:

> 'Tis good, in foreign tongues you're versed -
> But mastery of your own comes first.[15]

V INTERPRETING - THE PROFESSION AND ITS PROCESSES

We have tried to indicate the main features of professional interpreting as a skill, and of its practitioners. It remains to clarify its implementation. There are two modes by which professional interpreting is effected:

(i) Simultaneous interpreting (SI) - where the interpreter speaks while the person being interpreted speaks; and
(ii) Consecutive interpreting (CI) - where the interpreter speaks after the person being interpreted.

Both modes are subsumed under the generic title of the profession - 'conference interpreting' - and both can apply to either monologue or dialogue situations. Chronologically - obviously - CI antedates SI, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 being conventionally cited as CI's official début,[16] though - as we have already noted - interpreters were numerically quite strong even in antiquity. SI was first patented as a technique by IBM in 1926, and its first implementation (in whispered form, without the booths now deemed indispensable) was at Geneva in a tentative form in 1927 and, on a larger scale, in the USSR in 1928 for the sixth congress of Comintern. It is noteworthy that the major impetus for SI's early development and use came from the USSR (elsewhere the general access to French and English enabled CI - essentially the mode for a two-language context - to meet conference

needs much longer). It is of particular interest to note that the first scientific conference serviced by SI was on physiology (Leningrad, 1935), opened by none other than Academician I.P. Pavlov, theorist of conditioned reflexes! But it took the aftermath of World War to establish SI, just like CI before it - namely, the Nuremberg Trials, at which all the prosecuting nations used their own languages; scarcely a typical conference, perhaps, but the foundation of SI's subsequent primacy at multi-lingual official meetings, in particular (since 1951) those of the United Nations.

Two features conduce to SI skills being a rarer attainment than those required for CI:

(a) SI necessitates specialised technical equipment, the hire of which is a major expense for conference organisers;
(b) the need to react and talk rapidly in one language while hearing another requires particular personal qualities in the interpreter.

I do not subscribe to the view that SI is more difficult - intellectually or linguistically - than CI. Both modes are demanding in their respective ways, but - given a really good command of the two relevant languages, and the appropriate personality - both are attainable with practice. One learns to interpret by interpreting, preferably having had a good course of instruction first. And how right it is that personality matters - since 'persona' is primarily, in Latin, the actor's mask, or 'what the sound comes through'.

As I have implied, CI is by no means the easier mode of interpreting. It needs all the qualities of SI, including swift mental and linguistic reflexes and a considerable accumulation of empirical and intellectual luggage[17] from which he always has something to declare. CI, however, requires three other attributes in particular:

(i) note-taking skill (a highly-personalised knack);
(ii) a good, productive memory;
(iii) a positive, yet unobtrusive, personality, acceptable to the participants in the bilingual (or, less often, plurilingual) situation being interpreted.

Whereas SI enables the interpreter to sit out of the limelight, in the semi-privacy of a sound-proof booth - seeing, and being seen, through a glass (often darkly) and assisted by a colleague's jottings and research, even knitting (as one has observed) like latter-day Mesdames Défarge - in CI the interpreter is generally alone, at the table with the discussants, and thus - in almost every sense - exposed. There can be no doubt that, in its most demanding forms, CI is far from easy. Until you see it done, you cannot realise (sic) what interpreting is all about. Would that television showed it taking place (as and when it does take place), instead of 'cutting' it: what stimulus the numb-dumb British televiewer would derive - and what enjoyment! - from being at last unprotected from foreign languages, and seeing what it means to interpret. Far from being a discouragement, there are few more potent incentives to linguistic aspiration than this too rare experience.

Finally, in our adumbration of interpreting's real-life processes, we need briefly to consider the circumstances in which each of the two modes is used. The umbrella term 'conference interpreting' has considerable currency - witness the name of the professional association to which many, though by no means all, of its leading exponents belong (AIIC - Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence). It applies, and is applicable, mainly to multi-lateral, or bi-lateral, international meetings of a representative, specialist, or governmental nature, the proceedings of which are conducted in a largely formal manner. It is virtually only in such contexts that SI is used (for reasons mentioned). The great merit of SI is the sheer 'through-put' of business. The speaker does not have to pause for interpretation, and the latter is effected - in parallel - into as many languages as there are booths and interpreters for, with a lag (behind the speaker's utterance) of only 3 to 4 seconds on average. Hence all regularly-convening multi-national organisations have permanent, purpose-built accommodation for SI: the obvious examples - the UN and its constituent organisations, the European Community, the European Parliament, World Commodity Organisation, and Comecon - by no means exhaust the modern list. These bodies rarely use CI - though top professional interpreters are capable of both SI and CI, and there are few major opportunities in interpreting for anyone who is not.

On the other hand, CI - though difficult to perform well - finds more practitioners, simply because in this context supply is a function of demand. CI covers a very wide range of two-language situations, from 'Summit' conferences downwards. For formal meetings at almost any level CI would come into the category of 'conference interpreting' (see above) - as too would semi-formal or informal interpreting of speakers appearing in their official capacity (eg VIPs' speeches, post-prandial or of a similar nature; press-interviews; communiqués, etc). However, a less formal, less systematised label - 'ad hoc' or 'liaison' interpreting - is applied to the CI used in less formal situations, often with a less clearly defined rôle for the interpreter (perhaps only partial interpretation is required): for example, tours with foreign visitors or assistance to non-native speakers involved in the processes of law. Often the utterances, and even the situations themselves, are very brief. Thus, this latter type of CI - 'ad hoc' or 'liaison' interpreting - although less recognised and well-defined than its often quite significant contexts deserve, is set apart by its less formal nature from 'conference interpreting', in the eyes of the professional conference interpreters at least. It must be admitted, however, that the distinction is often a very fine one.

VI FROM PROFESSION TO PEDAGOGY

We have made a number of distinctions in our approach to what is here of focal interest - the teaching of interpreting to undergraduates. We have advisedly considered some, at least, of the philosophical and practical antecedents to what we may call 'pedagogic interpreting'. An appreciation of the profession of interpreting, such as we have given, is essential to a proper evaluation of 'interpreting in the undergraduate course'. As Plato makes clear, pedagogy is the 'leading on', the 'assisting', of the young mind to clearly

perceived goals in knowledge and skill. The mind must know what to imitate. So must the pedagogy.

For too long we have failed to make explicit in this context the most crucial distinction of all - as between **pedagogic interpreting (PINT)** and **subsequent aspiration to professional interpreting (SPRINT)**: the acronyms have perhaps a useful mnemonic logic. As I have discussed elsewhere,[18] we are not concerned with interpreters as an end-product of an undergraduate course: they might - after practical experience or a post-graduate course - prove a by-product, as has been borne out by the Bradford Postgraduate Diploma in Interpreting and Translating. Similarly, the Mus.B. does not produce a concert pianist.[19]

What makes the distinction valid, and even possible, is the empirical evidence of undergraduate teaching. Ironically, the sheer unfeasibility of the lofty vocational goals initially pursued in some technological universities has brought to light, if not to birth, pedagogical values in interpreting unsuspected in any methodological thinking that preceded its introduction to undergraduate language studies. But then it is in the nature of experiment that its fruits are often unexpected. Yet the identifying of interpreting's demands and benefits in language-learning poses its own challenge - to the methods of our teaching and to the planning of our courses. If our concern for oral and aural skills is genuine, it is a challenge we cannot ignore. Too much in modern languages degree courses is presented as if in watertight compartments: interpreting - because it draws on, and thus strengthens, the other course-constituents found worthwhile - affords, in a double sense, a means of communication. But our methods and our planning need to bring that out - not in the interests of interpreting per se, but to improve (as is very possible) the cohesion and thus the effectiveness of a modern languages degree course. And in the crucial matter of language competence alone, it is surely the case that at undergraduate level all skills are interdependent. Anything that promotes cohesion conduces to coherence.

VII PEDAGOGIC INTERPRETING - PREMISES AND PRINCIPLES

Most real-life interpreting situations can be simulated, as many of us know from experience. By the same token, the very process of interpreting - be it consecutive or simultaneous - can be performed, ie emulated. The Greeks, in their education that set such store on speaking and listening skills, had a word for it - 'mimesis', the 'imitation' of idealised models; moreover, they explained that imitation in terms of 'participation' is the exemplar envisaged. In teaching interpreting it is the imitation of reality that both stimulates and motivates the student. Given appropriate material, there is nothing more satisfying than to feel one is doing something realistic with language (one might add, perhaps -'at last'), and that one is learning - even coping - in a new, all-involving language context. This kind of speech 'act' can take on a degree of meaning for the student that will bring out for him - as for the more experienced interpreter mentioned earlier - unsuspected personal resources of linguistic knowledge, intellectual agility, and - thus - of

determination. Much, of course, depends on the tutor - not on the tutor's experience of interpreting, but on gradation of target-material and on conscientious monitoring and guidance of students during the interpreting process. As my colleague Brian Griffiths will make clear, the teaching of interpreting needs the language laboratory, but it also needs more active participation by the tutor - hence more exercise of vigilance and judgment - than do other uses of the language laboratory as a learning aid: put simply, there is no single 'right answer' to the task being tackled by the students. So far from presenting problems to methodology, this situation is rich in potential - for academic benefit, skill-acquisition, and (if duly prepared and sensitively conducted) enjoyment.

The key principle for pedagogic interpreting (PINT) is that it should be used on oral material - i.e. on material intended for oral delivery. It is tempting to think one can simply read to the students any journalistic report, with suitable voice inflexion, and ask for it to be interpreted - but the density of material, the structures of written style, and the absence of markers normally included by speakers as an aid to intelligibility, make such material difficult, unrealistic, and hence demoralising for the student. Perhaps a fair criterion of acceptability is whether as tutor one would have been able oneself, at the same stage as the students concerned, to cope with the interpreting text under consideration. We are, of course, talking of consecutive interpretation (CI) - since SI, though not necessarily more difficult - presupposes a control of the language, and of oneself, rarely present until an undergraduate is in the final year of the course.

The methodology of PINT, as we have dubbed undergraduate interpreting, and the ways of optimising its transfer-value need more time than this Conference allows. Knowing that the next paper will focus on pedagogical matters, I confine myself to observing that in my experience the student is initially best immersed in scripted utterances for interpreting practice - preferably the text of an actual interview. If the 'interview' is lifted from the press (a useful source of such material), care has to be taken to ensure that it has not been edited so much as to be unsuitable for oral presentation in an interpreting class. The normal procedure is that the tutor - or, if possible, two tutors - will perform the rôles of the interlocutors. The script should not be available to the student during the class, but can be usefully made available for individual consolidation work (plus or minus a recording) between classes - or, at that slightly later stage where one classroom-hour per text is sufficient, after the class. At more advanced levels of competence, in addition to the use of appropriately advanced (oral) texts, the most taxing - hence most rewarding - situation for the student is to be responsible for unscripted communication between two live (i.e. visibly present) interlocutors: this is the optimum 'imitation of reality'.

VIII THE QUART FROM THE 'PINT' BOTTLE

It is immediacy that makes interpreting - i.e. pedagogic interpreting - such a rewarding experience for both tutor and student: immediacy of challenge, of

reflex, of interpretation, of monitoring, of correction, and - not least, from the point of view of realism - of the interlocutor's response. All-involvement, in every sense, should be unavoidable - not only of the student group, but of the individual student's faculties and skills. It may with some justice be said that PINT 'reaches those parts that other (imbibings) fail to reach'. There is a third sense to 'all-involvement' - alluded to earlier in this section - which makes interpreting as a teaching-learning method **potentially the most relevant of all ingredients in a degree course intended to produce educated linguists.** It is that interpreting utilises, and optimises, virtually all other course elements. Thus -

(i) First and foremost, it is the enlivener of material (not just linguistic) taught under other headings.

(ii) It has great adaptability. With planning, it can complement and consolidate even the more theoretical aspects of language-study, for example, phonetics, stylistics, semantics, etc.

(iii) It is particularly the proving, and hence the improving, ground for the student's lexical and stylistic resources - transferring benefit thereby to both oral and written language-production in other areas of the degree curriculum.

(iv) It is unique as a medium for experiencing and applying in context, and thus for effectively assimilating, modern colloquial usage - an integral part of 'language as communication'.

(v) Interpreting provides that otherwise difficult link between the language laboratory (in its various applications) and the conversation class. It is highly doubtful whether the conversation class alone - even with the most experienced native teacher - can promote the same conversation capability as the combination 'interpreting + conversation class'.

(vi) In the interpreting situation misunderstandings, whether momentary or long-existing, are resolved immediately - the more so when, as should generally be the case, an oral 'fair copy' is provided by the tutor after each item interpreted.

(vii) Similarly, mistakes in language-production - be they grammatical errors or mistranslations - are allowed little or no chance to perpetuate themselves in the student's thinking (as can happen with non-oral, or semi-oral, work[20]), because of tutor-monitoring or (preferably - as unscripted scenarios allow) the puzzlement of the recipient-interlocutor.

(viii) Alone of all elements in a course focused on FL-acquisition, interpreting draws students' attention to their command, and delivery, of their native tongue - recalling the epigrammatic advice of Cato and Marshak, of the first and third Romes respectively, cited earlier. It may fairly be said that the student is learning to interpret **and** interpreting to learn.

Not the least among the all-involved in the potential of interpreting are course-designers and their consciences - which excludes no one. We have recognised that it should be as much of a challenge to our methodological thinking as it is to our students' linguistic and intellectual resources. But it also challenges our planning. If we who plan a university course, with its

broad educational purpose, fail to integrate interpreting with other course-elements, we not only devalue its academic potential, but overlook a rich source of the cohesion a university course can sometimes lack. Within a scheme of language studies, conjoined to studies of literature and society, interpreting can serve - like the interpreter himself - as an unobtrusive, but vital, link.

IX PEDAGOGIC INTERPRETING - THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have suggested the place of interpreting within the continuum of language practice, diachronic and synchronic, pedagogic and professional. It remains to consider its relationship with relevant aspects of linguistic theory.

Just as practice generates skill (our prime concern at this Conference), it is practice - in a different sense - that generates theory. We advisedly here treat theory after practice, as regards pedagogic interpreting. Theory, after all, as Greek tells us, means 'observation', and Sherlock Holmes pertinently remarks that 'it is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data'.[21]

There is, of course, theory 'a priori' and theory 'a posteriori'. We delineate pedagogic interpreting (PINT) from subsequent professional interpreting (SPRINT) on the basis of both. The 'a posteriori', struck by enlightening experience, led us to distinguish two species of teachable interpreting (PINT and SPRINT) because of their very different observable data - linguistic, psychological, and procedural. The 'a priori' element in the theory of PINT stems primarily from comparison with other theories of language - those of language-acquisition, translation, and (professional) interpreting (SPRINT). It is fashionable, though facile, to believe that there is no theory of SPRINT, whereas the theory of translation has attained an advanced stage of sophistication, not to say sophistry. This misjudgment is a measure of the extent to which hitherto academics have been in touch with the practice of translation, but not with the practice of interpreting. The fact is, however, that a number of researchers have contributed, and continue to contribute, to a theory of interpreting (SPRINT) as distinct and as refined as that of translation. Perhaps significantly, whereas the theory of translation owes most to academics who may have acquired practical experience, that of interpreting (SPRINT) owes most to professional practitioners turned academics. French, Russian and German contributors figure most prominently - notable among the more recent being Seleskovitch (Paris), mentioned earlier, and G.V. Chernov of the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, both professionals in their own right. Seleskovitch makes the point that while both translation and interpretation are concerned with sense rather than linguistic meaning, interpreters (of the SPRINT variety) aim for sense irrespective of linguistic meaning, while translators 'endeavour to equate the expression of sense, to a certain extent, with the linguistic meanings of the source language'[22] - a definition not wholly acceptable, perhaps, but a pungent distinction.

While Seleskovitch's observations on interpreters and translators may apply at professional level, and hence in the teaching of SPRINT, in pedagogic

interpreting (PINT) - on the other hand - the language itself is as much of a 'target' as the sense. Similarly, therefore, while the theory of PINT has points of resemblance to the theory of SPRINT - indeed, imitation (as we have made clear) is its essence - the teaching of each species of interpreting must differ in its assumptions and points of reference.

Although we should not be over-concerned to prove convergence between linguistics and performative language teaching (what Denis Girard less ambiguously calls 'language didactics'[23]), there is much in current linguistic trends that corroborates PINT and its evolving theoretical base. The emergence of psycholinguistics to succeed behaviourism affords many points of contact with pedagogic interpreting. Certainly the concern for student motivation and 'creativity', reflected in the influential work of Dell Hymes, Jakobovits, Wilga Rivers and others, is a major element in the aims and principles of PINT. Ironically, however, PINT bids fair to lend new significance to the language-laboratory, whose 'habit-forming' rôle the psycholinguists have discredited. In parallel to this trend in 'language didactics', we observe in linguistics itself a new vigour and (dare one say?) a greater realism - as evidenced, for example, by the Cambridge 'Tuesday Club'. They castigate overhasty Chomskyesque trends to deductively formulated theories of language. The study of language, it is felt, should be related to language-users and their individual circumstances or 'states' - what is weightily labelled the 'epiphenomenalist' view.[24] Thus we witness - in both 'didactics' (alias 'applied linguistics') and in theoretical linguistics - a bid for greater cognisance being taken of reality and context. Against this background pedagogic interpreting (PINT) - in both its theory and its practice - is evolving in a congenial climate. As we observe the trends in theory we are again reminded of the cyclic nature of learning, and we recall as still apposite the words of Sweet, founder of English linguistics, in 1899 - 'It is important to realise that the practical study of languages is not in any way less scientific than the theoretical'.[25]

Programmed learning for the acquisition of oral and aural skills has been clearly proved inadequate, both by the psycholinguists and by pedagogic experience. It has a rôle, to be sure, but how best is it to be mediated into natural language use, into daily oral and aural skills? There is also a different, but no less pressing, question confronting us. At a time when technology's rapid growth, and hence that of communications, is axiomatic, is the medium of communication - performative language skill - itself being optimised and propagated with comparable rapidity? In reply, we would suggest that PINT, properly purveyed, offers the infusion - and indeed, the fusion - required for both these communicative purposes. The key to advance in applied language, as distinct from applied technology, is not novelty, perhaps not even money (thus enhancing its feasibility) - but rather the 'mix' of methodological inputs and the motivation of participants: these are enhanced by realism and relevance - and interpreting provides both.

We are still, sixty years on, groping for what Palmer[26] posited as 'the complete method' in language. Again, the continuum - here, in methodological theory - is evident. The more we recognise the value of

realism and relevance, of creativity and motivation, the more Palmer's 'multiple line of approach' continues to press its validity. 'The complete method,' Palmer states, 'is not a compromise between two or more antagonistic schools; it boldly incorporates what is valuable in any system or method of teaching and refuses to recognise any conflict, except the conflict between the good and the inherently bad. The complete method will embody every type of teaching except bad teaching, and every process of learning except defective learning.' It might be Plato on the nature of 'mimesis'! But what is clear is that pedagogic interpreting, as we have discussed it, has a contribution to make to 'the complete method'.

CONCLUSION

Our treatment of the theory of pedagogic interpreting thus ends where our treatment of its practice began - with the emphasis on realism. In the evolving theory of PINT the imitation of reality is the key consideration. It is on this basis that we may define PINT - ie interpreting on the undergraduate course - as the contextualised combination of hitherto disparate, hence underdeveloped, performative language skills. Its strategic aims are twofold - i) sound judgment, and ii) confident performance, in oral (and written) communication - of a durability not merely sufficient to pass degree examinations. Its tactical objectives focus on four elements integral to oral and aural skills -i) comprehension, ii) phonology/fluency, iii) lexicon, and iv) grammar - to reinforce and improve them by contextualised application. The improvement of i) and ii) - comprehension and phonology/fluency - promotes skills; the reinforcement of iii) and iv) - lexicon and grammar - promotes knowledge. The sum of skills and knowledge is performance - not yet the peaks of professionalism, but the foothills at least.

In being thus 'led on' - as the word 'pedagogy' implies - to performance, the student acquires - as a natural concomitant - qualities of intellect and personality. This process, in turn, lends added meaning to the term 'pedagogic interpreting', and added educational worth to the course in which it figures. And, as we have made clear, it is the educated linguist, not the interpreter, for whom we are concerned in an undergraduate course - and for whom the need and opportunities exist.

By the end of the course, we are unlikely to say - even to the most talented linguists - 'rem tene, verba sequentur'. But we should be able to say to most students, after the manner of Lewis Carroll and Professor Seleskovitch, 'Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves'. A student worthy of those words should have the 'ring of oral confidence' in English, as well as in the foreign language. Most of us who teach language have an ideal of excellence to which, though we may fall short ourselves, we should like our students to approximate. To that end, pedagogic interpreting can be a means.

Notes

1. This fairly familiar quotation is an example of Latin's quite frequent rôle as interpreter of Greek. The latter here (Plutarch, Apophth. Lac. 233A) refers to 'the nightingale or any short-lived creature' - 'phona tu tis essi kai ouden allo', i.e. 'a voice and nothing more'.

2. Cf. SCHMIDT P: Statist auf diplomatischer Bühne, Athenäum Verlag, Bonn, 1968, pp 44-48; an accomplished interpreter on the importance of unobtrusiveness. Schmidt was chief interpreter in the German Foreign Office until 1945, and the reluctant mouthpiece for much of Hitler's 'diplomacy'.

3. This observation is prompted by the publication in the spring of 1983 of the DES consultative paper Foreign Languages in the School Curriculum, commented upon by Mr R H Bird, Deputy Secretary at the DES, at the opening of the present Conference.

4. SHERIDAN, Richard Brinsley (1751-1816): The Critic, Act I, Scene 1.

5. George Orwell's linguistic comments are not confined to Nineteen Eighty-Four. His concern and insight are vividly expressed in his essays - notably The English Language and Politics and the English Language in ORWELL S and ANGUS I (eds): The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Vol 3, (pp 40-46) and Vol 4 (pp 156-170), Secker and Warburg, London, 1968.

6. Cf. HODGE R and FOWLER R: Orwellian Linguistics in FOWLER R et al: Language and Control, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, pp 6-25.

7. JOHNSON Samuel (1709-1784): Vanity of Human Wishes.

8. Aristotle (Politics 1255^{a}) has the phrase 'anthropos phusei politikon zoon'. To Greeks the 'polis' was primarily the community to which they belonged. Hence LIDDELL H G and SCOTT R: Greek-English Lexicon, Vol II, OUP, 1951, render 'politikon' in this context as 'living in a community'. The version 'a political animal' is a subsequent distortion, and is neither the sense nor the intention of Aristotle's remark.

9. HOMER, Iliad IX, lines 442-443, as translated in LUCAS F L: Style, Cassell & Co. Ltd, London, 1955, p 23.

10. HERODOTUS, History II, 154, as discussed in HOW W W and WELLS J A Commentary on Herodotus, Vol. II, OUP, 1959, p 244.

11. CAESAR, De Bello Gallico I, 19.

12. Advice to aspiring orators at Rome, attributed to M Porcius Cato ('the Censor', 234-149 BC), founder of both rhetoric and prose in Latin.

13. Cf. SELESKOVITCH D: Why Interpreting is not Tantamount to Translating Languages, The Incorporated Linguist, Vol XVI, No. 2, Spring 1977, pp 27-33.

14. VAN HOOF R: Le Métier d'Interprète, The Incorporated Linguist, Vol XVI, No. 2, Spring 1977, p 40.

15. MARSHAK S: Epigram to an Interpreter/Translator in Liricheskiye epigrammy 'Sovetskiy Pisatel', Moscow, 1965.

16. CHERNOV G V: Teoriya i praktika sinkhronnogo perevoda 'Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya', Moscow, 1978, p 4.

17. Cf. SOUBBOTNIK S: Interpreting in the United Nations and its specialised agencies, The Incorporated Linguist, Vol IV, No. 2, April 1965, p 40.

18. POLLOCK R W W P: The Place of Interpreting in a University Modern Languages Course, Modern Languages, Vol LII, No. 1, 1971, pp 34-36.

19. BIRSE A H: Memoirs of an Interpreter, Michael Joseph, London, 1967, p 110. The author, who was personal interpreter to Churchill during World War II, develops a brief, but interesting, analogy between linguistic and musical interpretation.

20. Cf. BELYAEV B V: The Psychology of Teaching Foreign Languages, (trans. R F Hingley), Pergamon Press, 1963, p 220.

21. CONAN DOYLE A: Scandal in Bohemia.

22. SELESKOVITCH D: loc. cit., p 31.

23. GIRARD D: The Beginning of a New Era in Foreign Language Teaching?, The Incorporated Linguist, Vol XIV, No. 2, April 1975, p 38.

24. MOORE T and CARLING C: Understanding Language: Towards a Post-Chomskyan Linguistics, (Macmillan, London, 1982), p 151.

25. SWEET H: The Practical Study of Languages, 1899; reprint Oxford University Press, 1964.

26. PALMER H E: The Principles of Language-Study, 1922; reprint Oxford University Press, 1964.

THE EAR HAS ITS REASONS - INTERPRETING AND THE MODERN LANGUAGES CURRICULUM

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Relevance and realism: if these two criteria are indeed useful gauges of the appropriateness of the foreign languages learned and used by undergraduates, it would be reasonable to suppose that curriculum designers take them into account in determining the content and balance of modern languages degree courses. And so, to a greater or lesser extent, they do. Not in so many words, of course, since the people who draft the brochures tend to shudder at the mere thought of introducing the idea of relevance, a word which summons up uncomfortable associations, irksome references to another and much wider debate. Yet the language curriculum debate can, when looked at with sufficient perspective, be seen to be that wider debate writ small. So, although in the departmental brochures and modern languages syllabi the word itself may not appear, its spirit suffuses them through frequent references to 'modern' approaches, 'contemporary' studies, 'current' issues, and numerous allusions to 'applied' or 'practical' language work.

These are exciting times for linguists. The ferment of experimentation which followed upon the Robbins expansion is showing no sign of dying down. On the contrary, emphases are changing and new combinations of degree subjects are emerging - such as languages with law, theatre studies or management sciences - while more and more universities and polytechnics are experimenting with a steadily growing range of activities previously regarded as essentially vocational language skills. This latter phenomenon -the startling spread of the so-called applied language activities (ALAs) - is one of the most remarkable developments in language studies this century, and so it is important that the relevance of these to the modern languages degree should be rigorously tested and fully discussed.

PURE AND APPLIED

If by 'applied' one means applicable - that is, useful, usable in a given practical or even vocational situation - then the epithet clearly does refer to such language-processing activities as preparing an inter-language abstract, summary, report or brief; producing an analysis of a dossier of foreign language material; translating, editing, revising, copy-writing; producing an aural-written summary or an aural-oral report or précis; ad hoc interpreting and conference interpreting; simulations and games involving, for example, interpreting - or indeed simulations involving a combination of any or all of these activities. But 'applied' does not necessarily mean **post facto** - that is, subsequent to and dependent upon the acquisition of a generalised language competence: to take such a view would be to ignore this ferment, this surge of interest[1] in fresh approaches and new possibilities for the foreign language

curriculum. Unquestionably, the traditional base of the modern languages degree - literature, philosophy, philology, essay, prose composition, literary translation - is broadening, and in some places broadening rapidly, to admit some of these applied language activities.

It is interesting to speculate why this is happening, and among the many possible reasons there is one in particular - probably the most obvious - which recognises those two criteria referred to earlier: relevance and realism. At a time when economic and political pressures are growing and international communications are expanding faster than they have ever done before, the inappropriateness of an exclusively literary, formal and historical knowledge of a foreign language, one gained essentially through the written word, could scarcely be more apparent.

Yet this swing of the pendulum away from the traditional pursuits of modern linguists which has been gaining momentum since the mid-60s cannot have been motivated by vocational considerations alone. Of all modern languages graduates going into employment, considerably fewer than 3% take up posts as full-time linguists (translators, interpreters, information officers, researchers, etc.), and in any case such vacancies as do occur are tending to be filled by diplomates of the handful of institutions which run postgraduate courses in interpreting or translating or both.[2] The liberating and invigorating effect of some of the post-Robbins experiments has no doubt played a significant part in boosting the popularity of these more practical language courses, while fashion and consumer pressure[3] have also helped the pendulum on its way.

From all this experimentation an interesting mosaic of degree courses is taking shape. It would of course be unrealistic to expect every one of the many experiments in course design to prove completely successful, but given the inherently cautious attitude towards innovation throughout higher education in Britain, there is every chance that a good proportion of them will produce competent, adaptable, educated graduate linguists.

Where caution about this vogue in oral-based activities does exist, it often reflects scepticism about the extent to which such a graduate can indeed legitimately be called 'educated'. After all, say the sceptics, one cannot put a quart into a pint pot, and if time is to be spent in the acquisition of a number of what appear to be new tool skills it must be at the expense of some at least of the background studies in the humanities which made the traditional arts graduates what they were.[4]

It would not be appropriate here to dwell upon definitions of the term 'educated' as applied to modern linguists, nor to discuss the 'modernity' of their studies today (that is being done elsewhere[5]) but it could be useful to put one question to those sceptics who are loth to concede any changes in a curriculum already crowded with valid and satisfying pursuits. The question is this:

> Could there be anything in the claim that these oral-related activities, far from being mere practical skills which may or may not have some ulterior practical or vocational application, are actually in themselves processes which, when incorporated appropriately into the modern languages syllabus, can and do contribute to the undergraduate's intellectual and personal as well as linguistic development?[6]

The question could have some important implications for both curriculum design and pedagogical practice, and it is with these that the present paper is concerned. In particular, it is proposed to consider the teaching function of just one of these applied language activities, the one usually considered by students and teachers alike to present a special challenge, interpreting.[7]

LANGUAGE IN USE

This approach to the teaching and learning of modern languages could be regarded as a natural product of the growing European interest in language in use, as distinct from the North American concern with language as system. In Europe the focus has shifted away from the Chomskyan preoccupation with the putative language of 'the ideal speaker-listener' in a completely homogeneous speech community[8], and has moved more towards a concern with what happens when language is actually used in a heterogeneous speech community. In other words, it is moving towards a recognition of language as function - a development which teachers, grappling with the realities of trying to inculcate real language systems in real students, could not fail to welcome. This shift of emphasis was no doubt influenced by the seminal work in the early 1970s of the Council of Europe Language project team (Wilkins, Trim, Van Ek, Richterich) and by the work of Halliday, who underlined the social and essentially interactive nature of language; it was reinforced particularly by that of Hymes who insisted 'that there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless.'[9] As Janice Yalden pointed out, Hymes, by proposing that the definition of competence should include the concept of communicative function, 'points the way to the necessary expansion of what a second-language teaching programme must entail'.[10] And when Hymes, in reaching for a theory of language use, also proposed that the two notions of grammaticality and acceptability were not enough for judging a communicative act in a given culture, and insisted that four criteria had to be satisfied (namely, that the utterance must be formally possible, feasible, appropriate, and actually performed)[11] it was as though the postillion had finally been banished from the language classroom; in doing so Hymes gave fresh heart to those teachers who, at every level, were seeking confirmation that relevance and realism were after all theoretically respectable as well as pragmatically obvious objectives.

WIND OF CHANGE

The emergence over the past ten years or so of such a view of communicative competence coincided with and to some extent probably contributed to a growing interest in interpreting at undergraduate level. Some institutions, however, had introduced interpreting or other applied language activities

several years earlier,[12] so there must have been other factors at work as well. One likely explanation, already mentioned, is that of the post-Robbins wind of change: if this was clearing the way for imaginative links across disciplines, how absurd it would be not to envisage a relaxation of the rigidly compartmentalised structure of, say, modern languages degrees. But change, or even the thought of change, does not necessarily come so easily. Although the long succession of methods and approaches to language teaching since the 1930s (including the grammar-translation, audio-visual, structuro-global and direct methods, programmed texts, laboratory drills, psycho-drama, subconscious acquisition, suggestopedia, associative learning, computer-assisted programs and so on) may in varying degrees have had their effect in schools and colleges, the fact is that until quite recently language work in higher education had changed remarkably little.[13] The academic's conditioned preference for compartments and specialisations militates against the introduction of new practices, as does the implicit - or even, in places, explicit - hierarchy of esteem among specialisations which places the acquisition of a foreign language qua language well below the salt.

Almost certainly the decision to introduce these new activities into the degree syllabus did not spring from any one theory of language or language use or from any one methodological approach. To quote Janice Yalden again: 'There are now so many factors that need to be taken into consideration in teaching language and language usage that they cannot be handled in a satisfactory way within the conceptual framework that any one 'method' provides.[14] It seems likely that for most of the institutions where interpreting is taught to undergraduates today it is in the syllabus at least partly because of the contribution it is considered to make to all-round language competence. Experienced teachers, while perhaps accepting on the theoretical level a broadly defined communicative competence as one of the objectives of advanced language study, may also recognise pragmatically the role of language in use as a means of reaching that objective. And it is here that one can see most clearly the particular appeal of interpreting as a language-acquisition activity.

CHANGING EXPECTATIONS

The act of interpretation deals exclusively and intensively with language in action. The process necessarily develops and exercises intellectual, personal and linguistic skills, these being functions and capacities which, being useful in themselves, are of course also applicable outside the context of interpreting. Such a claim is a large one, and one which, if true, cannot fail to influence curriculum design, so it would be appropriate to attempt to identify some of the processes employed in the teaching of interpreting which are thought to have these effects. But first it might also be useful to enquire further into the spectacular and sudden irruption - sudden, that is, in terms of the usual pace of change in higher education - of such a range of unfamiliar language activities into modern languages degree studies.

This irruption is perhaps a sign that academics are prepared to consider taking the teaching of the language itself rather more seriously. Could it be

that we are taking note of the changes which are occurring at either end of the undergraduate spectrum - on the one hand changes in the nature of the A-level output, and on the other hand new expectations of what a language graduate ought to be capable of doing[15] - and that these changes mean that language teaching will have to be done well if it is going to satisfy a more sophisticated consumer in a more competitive market?[16]

Just how real and widespread these changes are will already be apparent to those academics in modern languages departments whose additional responsibilities include admissions, graduate careers and industrial experience or other 'sandwich' placements of students who spend a year abroad. Frequent contacts in such capacities with administrators, researchers, sixth-formers, language advisors, inspectors, professional linguists and innumerable employers of linguists have convinced the present writer that there is a growing expectation that all graduate linguists - and not just the exceptional five or ten per cent - should be capable of active, spontaneous and varied use of their foreign languages. The sting in the tail - and the challenge for curriculum design - is that these same people also tend to assume that such modern languages graduates will also possess the same intellectual and cultural strengths as their predecessors.

Here a reference to market forces - the mere mention of which can normally be relied upon to provoke a sharp intake of breath at any conference in any university - need not be taken in a narrow commercial sense. Interestingly enough, the link between the market-place and academic research is becoming more apparent. Today, a researcher can often not afford to wait until a conference comes up or a paper comes out: it is more and more a matter of going to see people, persuading experts to part with data or opinions now rather than in six or twelve months' time, tackling informants in their own language, infecting others with the researcher's own enthusiasm, recognising and circumventing prejudices, understanding national or even regional peculiarities - all of these clearly being activities which demand language competence of a high order.

A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY

We have seen in the preceding paper what this target activity, interpreting, consists of. Put very succinctly, by the time of the final degree examinations a student could be expected to demonstrate the ability to interpret normal discourse in the consecutive mode into and out of the foreign language, and in the simultaneous mode into the mother tongue only. If such a complex performance is to be taught, the teacher needs a strategy. Stated in the broadest terms, a pedagogical strategy within which such an objective could be attained would aim to do three things:

> firstly, to develop, enrich and consolidate the student's language base in both the foreign language and in the mother tongue (concentrating mainly but not exclusively on contemporary language and culture);

secondly, to promote a particular awareness of context, nuance and implication (an essential attribute of this type of linguistic Janus, who looks back to analyse the context and purpose of an utterance and forward to produce the precise effect the proper mediation of that utterance demands);

thirdly, to develop the communication skills, the stamina and the specific language-processing techniques which the act of interpretation requires.

The syllabus for such a course component could be conceived as having two levels, those of language and technique: the **operational syllabus**, which deals with the macro- and micro-skills of the interpreting process (the techniques of listening, comprehending, storing, recalling, presenting), and the **language syllabus** which defines the semantic, functional and formal elements appropriate to such activities.

As its name implies, the operational or technique-developing syllabus concentrates upon providing opportunities for students to practise each of the specific language-processing skills involved in the various phases of an interpretation. At times it will be convenient to concentrate upon the analysis phase (the techniques of listening, comprehending, sifting, classifying), while at others it will be necessary to develop and exercise techniques for storing information (memory processes, keywording and mnenomic devices, verbal and imaginal coding; note-taking systems); at frequent intervals, but especially once basic competence has been acquired and confidence is beginning to grow, it will be appropriate to give special attention to the synthesis phase (recalling, ordering, presenting). But this is not to suggest that these phases should be dealt with in this - or for that matter any other - particular order. Indeed, concentration on the various processes is likely to be systematic only to the extent that during, say, the final eighteen months of a course the teacher would take care to ensure that the whole range of such processes is adequately covered and that each is periodically reviewed. Experience suggests that the actual moment when each micro-skill receives attention is best dictated not by a linear syllabus but by opportunistic exploitation of a current event, a particularly appropriate piece of exercise material or a particularly apposite and illustrative performance on the part of a student.

But these language-processing skills, techniques and capacities - in other words, the objects of the operational syllabus - would of course have nothing to work on without their raw material, namely the foreign language and the mother tongue. The language syllabus for interpreting differs very little from one designed to meet the generalised language-learning needs of the modern linguist, and could also be seen as having two levels, the now-familiar levels of function and notion. The relevance of these two concepts to the act of interpreting is brought out by two obvious questions. At the level of language as function, one asks 'How must these concepts be formulated in the target language so as to express what the source language utterance is

seeking to **do**?' And at the level of language notions one asks 'What does the mediator (interpreter) need to **know** in order to express the ideational content of the utterance?'

Halliday's four basic functions of language (interpersonal, ideational, textual and logical)[17] together with Wilkins's six categories of communicative function (judgement and evaluation, suasion, argument, concession, personal emotions, emotional relations)[18] are useful pointers for speculating on the particular interaction of notion, function and form which occurs in interpreting, while at a more practical level they provide some very useful avenues of approach to language syllabus design, not only for interpreters but also for the generality of practical linguists.[19] When one considers the nature of the act of interpretation and looks at some of the ways of teaching it, it becomes apparent that the learner here could be exposed to some particularly rich and unusually complete language acquisition experiences, for in satisfactorily mediating an utterance the interpreter is obliged to take account of the **total context**, registering all the things that are going on in addition to the mere transmission of factual content. As Wilkins says, à propos of language users in general, 'The speaker's purpose is no less a matter of what he is doing with the language than of what he is reporting through it',[20] an idea taken up by Yalden, who observed (in connection with the communicative syllabus), 'When we speak our own language, or any other that we know well, we concern ourselves with much more than linguistic accuracy.'[21] And if that is true for 'ordinary' communication how much truer must it be for the specific act of inter-language mediation?

Whether speaking or listening, when we use our own language we tend automatically to keep a running account of the total context, noting on the way the functional intention of every utterance, registering those moments 'where more is meant than meets the ear.'[22] Thanks to our secure cultural base and our high level of language competence we are almost always right in our assessment of what is going on, and this tends to obscure the fact that this constant checking and up-dating is indeed happening. When an advanced language learner is using a language which he knows less than perfectly, however, the need for these clues to context and function appears at a much more conscious level; fortunately, in most language exchange situations feedback may well be available to indicate how successful an utterance has been, and there may even be opportunities to put things right or to 'home in' on the target in a subsequent exchange. What makes interpretation a particular challenge, of course, is that the pressure is on not only to mediate a source language utterance but to get its target language equivalent right first time, and without any apparent pause for thought. To perform this complex operation the interpreter has had to develop certain reflexes, reflexes which every advanced linguist already possesses but usually exercises in a much more leisurely or sporadic fashion.

Given that an act of interpretation seeks to convey and recreate in a different language and culture the content, intention, flavour and effect of an utterance, the interpretation will normally be the equivalent of sustained, natural, spontaneous speech, and will exercise the functional roles of adult

language referred to by Halliday, namely the interpersonal (establishing, maintaining or specifying relations between people), ideational (transmitting information), textual (providing the shape, tone and texture of discourse as required by the situation) and logical (expressing logical relationships).[23] Such a performance, complex and even daunting though it may appear, has been shown by experience to be well within the reach of the serious undergraduate linguist.[24] Experience also suggests that the student stands the best chance of acquiring the target skills if the syllabus is carefully graded.

A TEACHING SYLLABUS

So if it is true that there are good reasons - beyond the straightforward promotion of an applied skill - for teaching undergraduates the skills of interpreting, the question becomes one of defining the elements of a teaching syllabus. In such a brief survey as this the discussion of syllabus content must necessarily be limited;[25] all that will be attempted is an outline of a possible work-scheme covering a total of two years (this being the length of that part of the Bradford course during which formal tuition in interpreting is provided).[26] Table 1 overleaf summarises one approach to the first five weeks. Possible follow-up activities in weeks 6 to 14 (when the students start their year abroad) and subsequent work in Years III and IV are sketched in Tables 2 to 5, attached as Appendices A to D (pp. 107-111)

Table 1

Work-Scheme, Year II Interpreting*
BA Hons Modern Languages

Weeks 1-5 (Oct-Nov)
2 hours per week.

Weeks 1-2	Introduction. Link with aural comprehension and oral précis work in Year I. Look ahead to objectives: video examples of straightforward consecutive and simultaneous interpreting; discussion of skills involved and strategies for acquiring them. Group exercises (pairs or solo): short sentences, FL-E, memory only (heterogeneous news items, conversational exchanges, etc, with high information content. Eg. 'Not another hijacking, surely!/ I'm not quite sure that I agree with you, actually./ Oh, all right then!/ Is this the only room you have left?/ It's not just a question of finding the money for the trip, although of course I've got to admit that that is a big consideration./ I've never really thought of them in that light./ That's pretty unlikely, really - they've always been very quick to condemn car-bombings and things like that, haven't they?')
Weeks 3-4	Similar items as 'quickies' in 5-15 min. warm-up session, for memory only work, in group or pairs; followed by longer items with note-taking in groups, pairs or solo or in Language Laboratory (LL) with own criticism and tutor's comments. Discuss individual's memory-span limits.
Weeks 4-5	Group: 1. 5-15 min 'quickies', memory only, pairs and solo. 2. Discuss note-taking. Work-sheet exercises, solo or pair versions, with OHP presentation of solo performers' notes. Principles of notation (AKLAS: analysis, keywording, layout, abbreviation, symbolisation). Demonstration: one student tells anecdote, all take notes, interpreters perform solo or in pairs, compare and discuss notes on OHP. Further exercises, with occasional OHP illustration. Discuss essential starter kit of concepts. 3. Audio-workroom exercises for developing memory and practising numerals, paraphrase, selection, reduction, abbreviation. Further task: listen to daily news broadcasts on own radio or in audio-workroom.

(* Note: Consecutive only. Simultaneous is introduced in Year III)

THE RESOURCES QUESTION

Although the subject of technical resources to support such work is dealt with in some detail elsewhere,[27] perhaps a very brief mention might be made of it here, if only to dispel an understandable misconception. It is sometimes said that only those institutions blessed with an abundance of specialised facilities can seriously undertake to teach interpreting. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. For the purposes of undergraduate teaching it is perfectly feasible to teach interpreting - and to do so effectively, efficiently and enjoyably - with equipment already commonplace in all language departments. Obviously, any institution or department offering a course leading to a postgraduate diploma in interpreting must be able to demonstrate and simulate international conferences, and indeed must provide its students with regular and intensive experience of interpreting under actual conference conditions; such a vocational objective does indeed require special equipment.[28] But there can be few if any modern languages departments which would have difficulty in providing the following very modest scale of facilities:

a. Language laboratory, preferably with sufficient space for group teaching,[29] or, failing this, a seminar-room sufficiently close to allow the lesson to move readily from group work to laboratory activities.
b. OHP.
c. Private tape study facilities ('spare' language laboratory spaces, home loan cassettes and recorders, audio library).
d. (Desirable options)
   Video replay equipment
   Audio cassette recorder for group work.

PRACTICE AND PARTICIPATION

So we have an outline syllabus and a necessary minimum of technical facilities. But before considering the actual lesson it might be useful to remind ourselves that with spoken language, as with most complex performative acts, there is no substitute for actually doing it. While it is possible and, as already mentioned, at times useful to isolate particular elements of a performance, it is generally sound practice so to arrange things that as many students as possible do as much actual interpreting as possible on as many occasions as possible. Inevitably - especially in the early stages - many of these utterances will be far from perfect, but the important thing is to build a framework of actual performance experience upon which to improve. So a useful policy, especially early on, is to make a point of encouraging each and every attempt, urging students to commit themselves, to get started, to handle the ideas they can manage, and not to hold back because of a problem they can see coming up; they may even solve the problem when it comes, but in any case if they do get stuck, then at least a significant part of the task will be behind them, and will most probably prove to be useful experience to build on later. If it can be established that every

attempt tends to make the next one easier, and that a partial success is better than baulking at the obstacle in advance and therefore producing nothing, then a major advance will have been made in the psychological preparation of the student for this language activity - and for others, of course.

THE CRITICAL FACTOR

It almost goes without saying that atmosphere in such teaching sessions is also of critical importance. No-one enjoys making mistakes in public, and in this respect intelligent, able, keen students who are accustomed to doing well in some or most of their endeavours are as human as the rest of us. Yet in a group activity of this sort mistakes or imperfections are a virtual certainty, even with the most scrupulously graded material, and especially when the conduct of a class is particularly lively and opportunistic. So if keen and often very self-critical students are to encourage themselves and each other to 'have a go at it', the atmosphere must be good-humoured, lively and supportive, which is not to say unserious: there needs to be an underlying note of earnestness which says, 'I think you can make a good attempt at this one - show me!'

The group dynamics of such classes have already been mentioned. It would be difficult to over-state the importance of a supportive, encouraging, confidence-building atmosphere in such work. And work it must be, but not just any work: practice is good, but carefully-graded practice is better. It long ago became fashionable to scoff at patterns, drills and such horrors as operant conditioning, but some good came out of the frenzy of programming and drilling that marked the 'sixties, and we have to recognise that one of the contributions that the behaviourists made to the theory and practice of teaching was a convincing demonstration of something that good teachers had always intuitively known - the importance of success in learning.

STEADY PROGRESSION

Interpreting is a difficult act, but not an impossible one. As every student knows, the teacher who consistently sets performance targets beyond the learner's reach is not necessarily a brilliant and inspiring mentor who knows the value of high standards: he might instead be insensitive, arrogant, negligent, or incompetent - or worse. No, in this activity, where the aspiring performer is so vulnerable (is there in fact any other language learning activity where the learner is so exposed?) it is vital that the teacher selects, grades and handles exercise material so that while maintaining a steady progression in the level of difficulty he ensures that there are enough successful elements within a given performance to do three things:

a. to provide positive encouragement to the performer;
b. to permit a realistic rhythm of performance to emerge;
c. to enable effort to be sustained for long enough to ensure that stamina builds up progressively.

The link between difficulty level and fatigue is often overlooked, especially by the 'throw 'em in at the deep end' school. Interpreting, combining as it does intense mental effort with varying degrees of stress, is among the most tiring of all the activities undertaken by the advanced linguist. Stamina is therefore essential, and while it is certain that extensive and regular practice can build up the capacity to sustain a performance, exhaustingly intensive sessions or extremely difficult exercises can be counter-productive, particularly in the early stages.

It is here that one can see the greatest difference between the approach found in certain professional interpreters' schools and that of those undergraduate schools which include interpreting in the curriculum. There is no reason, indeed, why their approaches should be the same: the former, in the main, recruit ready-made linguists at graduate level or above and have a very short time in which to prepare the exceptionally gifted ones for employment in a very demanding profession, so it is not surprising that only the fittest can be allowed to survive; the latter, on the other hand, see interpreting as one component among several in a balanced educational process. Thus it could be argued that brutal sink-or-swim methods have no place in an undergraduate school where the course curriculum and the admissions policy are such as to permit the assumption that virtually every student enrolled is potentially capable of acquiring a satisfactory level of competence in all of the skills prescribed for the degree.

The normally assiduous undergraduate is in principle expected to succeed. But what constitutes success in this particular activity? As with any language utterance, in an act of interpretation there is much more going on than the mere reporting of ideational content: a pedagogical strategy for interpreting must therefore embrace the whole spectrum of events and situations associated with that act; it must ensure that the learner not only becomes progressively more aware of the total context but also becomes increasingly adept at identifying its most significant elements and adjusting the interpretation to take account of them.

The contribution which learning to perform such a process must make to comprehension and communication, and thus to all-round language competence, could scarcely be more obvious. Yet the teacher's concern that an interpretation should be just as rich, just as appropriate in its own way as the original utterance (in other words, a recreation of that reality) has led some sceptics to focus upon the 'second-hand' nature of the interpreted message, and from this to conclude that the intellectual processes involved are somehow inferior to those employed in spontaneous original speech. Such a partial view need not detain us here, but it does have the merit of raising an interesting point for the curriculum debate.

VALUED COMPLEMENTS

The extent to which interpreting can be said to complement other academic activities has already been commented upon, but it might not be out of place to refer more closely to its particular relation to the two elements in the

curriculum with which it has most in common - the translation seminar and the conversation class with the foreign language assistant. It might be useful in fact to take a further example from Bradford, where interpreting is part of the language 'core' of the modern languages degree, and its nearest relative is the weekly small-group conversation session with a foreign language assistant. One could perhaps suppose that as far as spontaneity is concerned these two activities would be at opposite extremes. The conversation class - unquestionably a most valuable and highly-esteemed activity, with its own objectives and practices - is normally taken to be open-ended, participatory, spontaneous and wide-ranging; and it can at times be all of these, even when - and sometimes especially when - it is deliberately organised around a functional focus. In practice, because of variables such as personality factors, competing interests, adequacy of preparation, pressure of time, etc, the student participant, when expected to make a spontaneous contribution to the discussion, usually has a number of other options available, such as using prepared material, temporising, steering the discussion, avoiding difficult subjects, side-stepping awkward constructions, etc. In the interpreting situation, however, the student has much less room for manoeuvre: he has no control over the incoming message, and strictly speaking should have no influence upon the direction of the discussion; he is of course tied to the precise message, and is subject to the intellectual discipline of having to gauge possible formulations against the strict criterion provided by the speaker's actual utterance. He is also tied to the spontaneity of the speakers, who are normally expressing themselves in their mother tongue and reacting to other people. The content of the interpreter's output, therefore, is often more precise and can well have more essentially spontaneous features than are found in some conversation sessions. The translation seminar and the interpreting class provide a further interesting example of contrast and complementarity. Looking at a typical text for translation, one would normally expect it to be a more or less homogeneous communication: the conceptual approach and the range of discourse types, registers, textures and stylistic features are likely to fall within a fairly narrow band and of course to remain there, the context being static. In the case of free dialogue, however, all those same features, not to mention tone, colour, texture and content, can and often do vary in range rapidly and dramatically; if in addition one considers the interpersonal and the paralinguistic dimensions, it becomes clear that dialogue interpretation involves a peculiarly rich fund of linguistic and sociolinguistic relationships and therefore potential experiences.

As we have seen, the interpreting class has some of the features of the translation seminar and the conversation class; in particular it shares with the former a broadly similar objective and the opportunity to examine and evaluate alternative solutions, while with the latter it has in common the oral medium, an interest in current issues, and a concern with fluency and clarity. One obvious but very significant difference is that the interpreting class is usually conducted in a language laboratory, and therefore can, and generally does, involve a range of activities which demand intensive participation on the part of the students; this being so, whatever the type of exercise all the participants are faced with two more or less inescapable

obligations: firstly, to respond all the time, thus attempting to solve each and every problem set, and secondly to attempt a solution to the precise problem set. If the first obligation is met, all students should cover much the same ground and participate virtually all of the time. If the second obligation is faced seriously, the temptation to settle for an approximation or an avoidable paraphrase tends to be resisted, as the student interpreters are aware not only of the need for precision but also of the fact that their versions are likely to be reviewed and analysed straight away by the group, by the tutor or by another individual; being what they are, undergraduates will generally be keen to perform well in these circumstances. When an interpretation has been attempted and a performance is being reviewed, the ensuing group discussion usually produces an abundant crop of alternatives, nuances or 'near misses' - the sort of material which young and receptive minds are quick to sift and consign to semantic memory.

To judge from the interest it continues to generate and from the way it has spread since first appearing nearly twenty years ago, interpreting has established itself firmly in the undergraduate modern languages curriculum. Its appeal as a practical tool, a communication skill, an intellectual and personal discipline and a complement to other studies has long been obvious to many academics, while steadily growing numbers are also recognising the powerful contribution it can make to active, intensive learning of the spoken language.

Today, few who have taken a fresh look at the teaching of modern languages to undergraduates can seriously doubt that interpreting and many of the other applied language activities have earned their place in the curriculum. But the future contribution of these activities lies more in the opportunities they offer both within and beyond the current boundaries of modern languages and area studies. They challenge first the curriculum designers to remove artificial barriers and create new combinations within and across disciplines. They challenge also the teachers, whose task must surely be to develop increasingly efficient methodologies for a growing range of language teaching activities. And finally they challenge the providers and managers of resources to ensure that technology serves methodology effectively and economically.

NOTES

1. The chairman of the plenary session at which this paper was delivered, Professor Frank Willis, called for a show of hands to test this assumption. He asked how many lecturers present used interpreting - in any form - as a teaching activity in degree courses: 28 raised their hands. (As well as various other institutions and organisations, 34 universities and 14 polytechnics were represented at the conference.)

2. E.g. Bath, Bradford, PCL, Salford.

3. For example, UCCA league table analysts are quick to spot trends in demand, as expressed by movements in the A level grades required. Careers advisers in schools are keener than ever to interpret the small print in brochures, while sixth-formers who visit universities on open days or for interviews are more informed about course content and more inclined to ask pertinent questions than their counterparts of five or ten years ago. See, for example, Brian Heap's annual review, 'Degree Course Offers' (CRAC).

4. That is, skilled in handling abstract ideas, very knowledgeable in the subject areas which particularly interested their teachers, potentially capable of teaching or undertaking research in those same areas, competent in written expression in the mother tongue - and, in the case of linguists, in a foreign language - and possessed of the broad literary culture which marked the 'educated' person.

5. At the Bradford conference a plenary session and subsequent workshop meetings were devoted to discussion of the question 'How modern is the modern languages degree?'

6. The proposition is cogently argued by Richard Pollock in the preceding paper in this series. (Vide pp. 73-88)

7. This is not to undervalue the other applied language activities. Indeed, although interpreting has tended to attract most attention, they must all have contributed to the oral syllabus explosion. These activities, although in themselves discrete and separately examinable processes, are so flexible and adaptable that they can easily be made to complement, link, develop or serve other parts of the syllabus. In other words, they are a step nearer the Holy Grail of the syllabus designer - the integrated course, one in which each element deliberately takes cognizance of, serves and is served by all the others. (Here the view is taken that in the absence of the ideal situation - i.e. one where the student synthesises for himself the intellectual and cultural diet supplied by an adequate number of brilliant and exceptional tutors - it is desirable to work towards a planned, coherent syllabus.)

8. CHOMSKY, N: Aspects of the Theory of Syntax, MIT, 1965, p 3.

9. HYMES, D: 'On communicative competence', in Pride and Holmes, Sociolinguistics, 1972.

10. YALDEN, J: The Communicative Syllabus, Pergamon, 1983, p 12.

11. Hymes, p 281.

12. Bradford, for example, introduced the 'new' syllabus in 1964. For a useful early survey of how modern languages curricula were developing in higher education, see James and Rouve, Curricula and Performance in Modern Languages, CILT, 1973.

13. The standard diet - the one on which probably 90% of today's language teachers in higher education were brought up - seems to have varied very little this century. The traditional 'lang-lit' course consists of a weekly prose and translation, literary essays in the foreign language, literature, philology and civilization lectures, further assimilation of the foreign language by osmosis through extensive reading, and perhaps a weekly conversation class with a foreign language assistant.

14. Yalden, p 16.

15. As most linguists know to their cost, non-linguists - particularly employers - have long tended to expect language graduates straight from university to be capable of handling current or even specialised foreign language material, and even of interpreting for, say, foreign visitors. Until recently, of course, only very exceptionally would such an assumption be justified. But the spread of applied activities has meant that some graduates are in fact showing themselves to be increasingly capable of tackling these or similar tasks, or at the very least rapidly adapting to them. Are we approaching the time when a latter-day Samuel Butler would not be able to comment ruefully that 'the dons are too busy educating the young men to teach them anything'?

16. Standards in the traditional and familiar language activities are of course very well established, but for the newer activities it will be some time before a consensus emerges on the form and content of examinations and on performance criteria. Even so, for an activity to be justified within the framework of a degree course, one could expect it to satisfy two requirements: firstly, that the material it employs and the processes it entails should be both intellectually demanding and culturally substantial; and secondly, that the performance required of the candidate should resemble or be an adaption of a real-life application of that skill in a social, cultural, industrial, administrative or other situation. As an illustration one could take the example of interpreting in the final degree examinations at Bradford, where the aim has been to produce a reasonably realistic test of basic competence in interpreting. There are two tests for each honours language:

    a. Consecutive interpreting. The candidate is required to interpret

into and out of the foreign language a two-way dialogue delivered at normal conversational speed, involving a fairly wide range of types of discourse and lengths of utterance. The examination test lasts 20-30 minutes.

b. Simultaneous interpreting. The candidate is required to interpret simultaneously a speech delivered in the foreign language at normal conversational speed, chosen from a fairly narrow range of types of discourse. The examination test lasts 6-10 minutes.

In both tests the interpreter's version is expected to be reasonably accurate and contextually appropriate, promptly and acceptably presented. Both tests are conducted in the conference laboratory, each student's taped performance being subsequently assessed by a panel of examiners.

17. HALLIDAY, M A K: Languages as Social Semiotic, Arnold, 1978, p 21.

18. WILKINS, D A: Notional Syllabuses, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp 44-54.

19. A communicative syllabus based on a needs analysis for undergraduate language learning would have large areas in common with one devised for undergraduate student interpreters. But in view of the special need for actuality, spontaneity and flexibility in interpreting classes, the 'language' part of the interpreting syllabus would perhaps be more usefully expressed in outline only, serving indeed more as an occasional check-list than as a linear syllabus designed to be worked through systematically.

    To take one small illustration of this approach: if the tutor noted that students had difficulty in recognising or expressing nuances in modals, it would be a simple matter to slip some examples into routine dialogue interpretation exercises (both into and out of the foreign language), so that over a period of a few weeks a range of items expressing various degrees of certainty, approval, commitment, support, etc. will have been covered. (See, for example, the categories in Chapter 2 of Wilkins (1976).)

20. Wilkins, p 23.

21. Yalden, p 20.

22. Milton, 'Il Penseroso', 120.

23. Halliday, loc cit.

24. To take the Bradford example alone, over 1000 graduates have qualified since interpreting was introduced as a compulsory element in the language core of the modern languages degree in 1964.

25. However, during the conference at which this paper was presented, several workshop sessions were devoted to detailed discussion of interpreting as a language-learning activity.

26. A peculiarity of the Bradford course is the timing of the year abroad. There are three phases: eighteen months at Bradford, then the year abroad, then a further eighteen months back at the University. Interpreting tuition (two hours a week per language) starts at the beginning of the second year.

27. Nearly one third of the 24 workshops at the conference were to a greater or lesser extent concerned with educational technology in advanced language teaching. Among other matters, workshops met to discuss field recordings of language material, teaching and testing in the advanced language teaching laboratory, future resources for language learning, the conference interpreting laboratory, exploiting video resources, direct broadcast satellite TV, and computer-assisted language learning.

28. For a brief description of the Bradford 12-booth conference laboratory (installed in 1976) see Griffiths, B T, 'Resources for training interpreters - a conference simulator', CNAA Report Resources for Modern Languages, CILT, 1979, pp 27-28.

    For an illustration of later developments, (two 12-booth conference laboratories installed in 1983) see 'Language Monthly', December 1983, pp 8-10.

29. For an illustration of this type of language laboratory, see 'Language Monthly', December 1982, p 10.

TABLE 2

Work-Scheme, Year II Interpreting* — Weeks 6-14 (Nov-Feb)
BA Hons Modern Languages — 2 hours per week

Weeks 6-14

1. Every class starts with 5-15 min. session of live-voice 'quickies' in group for memory-only pair or solo work into and out of FL: short, miscellaneous news, information or comment items, some recapitulating or consolidating earlier work, others as 'primers' for more difficult items to come later. Length or difficulty increase as techniques and memory improve.

2. These warming-up and reflex-developing sessions are followed by one or more of:

a. Further notation practice: short to medium items (up to 1 minute in length), live voice source (tutor), range extending to include references to other work (contemporary society, translations, politics, practical aspects of the approaching year abroad, etc); occasional emphasis on specific micro-skills (eg. keywording, selection); occasional OHP review of notes (esp. layout, lists, symbols, abbreviations).

b. Longer taped or live anecdote or report (up to 2-3 minutes) with strong chronological or logical thread (hence fewer notes) in:
- LL, for solo work, review and criticism, or
- Group, for solo work and joint criticism

c. Longer speech (up to 2-3 minutes) mostly FL-E, occasionally E-FL, for:
- solo work in booth, including review, criticism and occasional re-working to produce a polished version; followed by group discussion.
- Similar exercise, but with pair criticism (ie. of partner's version by swapping tapes, plugging in headset to neighbour's machine and listening together, or by electronic pairing, for certain laboratories).

d. Two-language dialogue (live voice source: tutor and foreign language assistant, or student and tutor) in group around table, students taking turns to interpret consecutively. Occasionally record proceedings for subsequent review in groups or for private study in audio-workroom.

Two-language dialogue (audio or video source) all students work individually in LL booths; criticism and occasional re-working of own versions, with selective criticism by tutor; then group discussion of difficulties and solutions, either in 'group conference' mode in LL or out of booths round console,

with occasional OHP for notation problems and occasional loudspeaker version of a student's track.

(* Note. Consecutive only. Simultaneous is introduced in Year III).

Appendix B

TABLE 3

Work-Scheme, Years II and IV Interpreting
BA Hons Modern Languages

Year III, Weeks 15-20
2 hours per week

Year III
Weeks 15-16

1. Reintroduction. Review of objectives: the place of interpreting in the 'language-core'; the finals interpreting examinations (demonstration). Explanation of aim: to retain present fluency, to capitalise on experience abroad, and to develop the skills tested in the final examinations. Exercise in group: short news item (eg. radio report of a summit meeting - agenda, personalities, incidents, critical issues, etc); all take notes, one student interprets solo; group discussion of problems (comprehension, selection, storage, notation, recall, presentation) and strategies for overcoming them.

2. Revision of note-taking technique. OHP of possible notes for the 'summit' news item; discussion of selection of key ideas, aptness of abbreviations, symbols, layout. Audio-workroom task: similar consecutive exercise, with worksheet for checking text afterwards.

3. Long consecutive exercise in LL (dual-purpose: to practise techniques while revising principles): 15-minute speech in FL on the principles of consecutive notation (clearly spoken and at a steady pace, but very prolix, with numerous repetitions, recapitulations, clarifications, etc.) solo versions in booths, own review and criticism (with tutor's help) checking content against worksheet issued. Task: take away worktapes, exchange with a partner and review partner's version before next class. In next class, invite comments on content and presentation in the version reviewed; illustrate where appropriate on loudspeaker. Inventory of strengths and weaknesses. Reminder of strategies for maximising progress: frequent practice, regular reading and listening, regular follow-up in audio-workroom, frequent critical review of notation, deliberate broadening of experience, occasional tutorials for stock-taking.

Year III
Weeks 17-20

1. As before, every class starts with a group 'quickies' session, but now the pair work is progressively giving way to solo performances, after each of which another student provides a short commentary on its accuracy and effectiveness.

2. LL and group exercises, similar in format to those in Table 2, 2 a-c, but with greater use of radio, audio and video recordings as source material.

3. Audio-workroom tasks:

a. study of designated two-track tape of an actual simultaneous interpretation: identify problems, linguistic devices employed, particularly successful/unsuccessful elements. Prepare to comment in class in Week 21.

b. Designated simultaneous exercise: interpret the speech without stopping the tape, review and criticise own version, using worksheet. (The speech to be interpreted is usually on a familiar theme; it could, for example, be the continuation of a speech already partly used as a consecutive exercise.)

Appendix C

TABLE 4

Work-Scheme, Years III and IV Interpreting
BA Hons Modern Languages

Year III, Weeks 21-26
Year IV, Weeks 1-25
2 hours* per week

Consecutive Interpreting

Year III
Weeks 21-26
Year IV
Weeks 1-25

1. As before, most classes begin with a group activity, a series of short items for prompt consecutive interpretation using memory alone, sometimes followed by longer items using notes. The ratio of FL and English utterances will vary, depending upon the nature of the topic, the aims of the lesson and the observed needs of the group. Increasing attention is paid to promptness, resourcefulness, accuracy, nuance, tone, contextual awareness and synthesis. Students will be expected to be increasingly strict and objective when criticising their own and others' versions during group and pair work.

2.

a. Exercises similar in format to those outlined in Table 2, 2 a-e, will continue to be used. By this stage they make increasing demands on the student's linguistic and

intellectual resources as well as on stamina and personality. Utterances vary in length from a short phrase to a 1-5 minute response.

b. In the warming-up session it is occasionally useful to abandon the usual deliberate heterogeneity and concentrate on a specific theme (e.g. alternative energy, EMS, CAP, parliamentary procedures, wage negotiations, disarmament, Middle East, information technology, etc.) sometimes with, sometimes without prior announcement. If at the beginning of Year IV a list of such themes is shared among all the students in a group, each individual undertaking to produce a short (50-150 words) glossary of useful terms relating to his particular theme, a given 'quickie' session can take the form of a dialogue between the tutor and the student 'expert' (that student's glossary serving as a basis for the exchanges); all such glossaries are subsequently be distributed to the whole group, after any necessary editing.

3. Other possible activities include:

a. Games and simulations involving two or more participants (perhaps from other academic areas) with interpretation into and out of the FL. (E.g. a press conference, a business discussion, a sales visit, an interview with an author, politician or economist, negotiations for a twin-towns event, a dispute on pay and conditions, a delegation pressing a list of complaints, etc.) Roles can be played by tutors, foreign language assistants, visitors or students.

b. Interpreting for visitors: all HE institutions receive academic or other visitors from abroad; such visitors are usually more than willing to be interviewed on the reasons for their journey and to talk about their own country. Whether the visitor genuinely needs interpretation or not (and many do, of course) for the student the experience of actually interpreting for a foreign visitor in an impromptu exchange is usually an unforgettable experience and a valuable stimulus.

c. Past examination material (normally not identified as such until after the exercise has been worked) is introduced during the final 12 weeks.

(* Note. 2 hours, shared with Simultaneous Interpreting, Table 5)

TABLE 5

Work-Scheme, Years III and IV Interpreting
BA Hons Modern Languages

Year III, Weeks 21-26
Year IV, Weeks 1-25
2 hours* per week

Simultaneous Interpreting (into English only)

Year III
Week 21

1. Discussion of problems of simultaneous interpretation, based on experience of exercises completed in Weeks 18-20 (Table 3, 3a and b).

2. Straightforward LL exercise, 4-5 mins., based on 1 above, but delivered ad lib by tutor with occasional changes of detail: frequent redundancies, repetitions, clarifications, pauses for effect, theatrical touches, etc. Students review and criticise own versions, with help from tutor at console. Group discussion follows, with loudspeaker illustration of extracts from students' versions (generally, only good or otherwise especially interesting performances are demonstrated in this way).

Weeks 22-26

1. Similar exercises to 2 above (with 'priming' in previous class where appropriate) gradually increasing in length and density.

2. Audio-workroom exercises, at least one between each class. (Again, these could be a continuation of a speech already partly covered.)

Year IV
Weeks 1-25

1. A steady progression of LL exercises, ranging from speeches delivered by the tutor, foreign language assistant or foreign visitor, audio and video recordings of speeches made by politicians, economists, spokesmen, interviewers, members of the public, media commentators, etc, on a range of social, political, economic and cultural affairs. By week 10, students will be coping with speeches of some 5-15 minutes delivered at a steady pace in a fairly standard accent.

2. Audio-workroom exercises. Similar material. At least one exercise between each simultaneous interpreting class.

3. As in the case of consecutive, actual past examination tests are introduced (unannounced) during the final 12 weeks.

(* Note. 2 hours, shared with Consecutive Interpreting, Table 4)

Interpreting in the Undergraduate Course, 3

LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE, CONTEXT AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE INTERPRETER

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Rather than attempting to define and describe the role of interpreting in the degree course in any general way, I shall here confine myself to two aspects, first by returning briefly to the question of skills and then by touching on that of personality, insofar as it affects our perception of the interpreting process.

In the conference theme of 'oral and aural skills' we all have a clear idea of what we mean by 'oral and aural', but the precise definition of a 'skill' and, more importantly, its place and ranking in a degree course have been the subject of some debate. In furtherance of this debate I find it useful to revive an old distinction, between what I shall refer to as language performance (LP) and language knowledge (LK). If one defines LP - the act of communication - as each and every speech act or utterance, and LK as the way in which, as foreign-language learners particularly, we perceive a language, as presented to us in dictionaries, rules of grammar and syntax, it will be immediately obvious that my two categories are none other than the familiar Saussurian terms of parole and langue respectively. Here it is worth reminding ourselves that LP or parole is by nature existential (if that term does not sound altogether too quaint these days): for the first-language, native speaker, LP precedes LK, the existence of parole precedes the essence of langue. Indeed many people, no doubt the majority, use their native language very adequately for the purposes of everyday communication with their fellows without ever being conscious of its existence as a language, or certainly without reference to 'the language' in the sense in which I have defined LK, as mediated through dictionaries and grammar rules. Even where the native speaker is aware of his language, performance normally comes first.

The speaker of a foreign language will however generally work in the opposite direction, proceeding at least in the initial stages and for many for a considerable time thereafter from LK to LP. And yet our aim, surely, is to bring our students to the point where they perform in the foreign language (rather more) spontaneously, without (constant) reference to rules and norms, which in any case are at best generalisations. LK is not - or should not be - the sole determinant of LP.

For the foreign-language learner, therefore, LK as defined is a necessary though not a sufficient condition of LP - and it is performance, not just knowledge, that we are seeking to achieve when we include among our goals the skills of foreign-language comprehension or expression, whether oral or written. What we are most emphatically not seeking to produce is the

graduate who is a walking encyclopaedia of dictionary-based information but is tongue-tied when confronted with a native speaker of French, German, etc.

What is missing in the equation, given that LP requires more than LK, is quite simply context. The vital need to know the context of an utterance may be illustrated by the following example. When I switch on my radio I happen to hear someone speaking about 'the forties', though I do not know in what connection, or even to what station I am tuned. Supposing that I am acting here as interpreter, I can imagine a number of renderings into eg. French of 'the forties', but which of these is appropriate will depend entirely on context, for example:

> the forties may well be suitably rendered as les années quarante, but only if the context supports it, eg. the programme may be a review of a book entitled 'British Economic Policy since the War'.

With different contextual cues (or clues) the rendering will differ. If the context is a report on the round-the-world yacht race, then

> the forties will be conveyed by an expression containing the term par 40° de latitude (sud if the competitors are in the South Atlantic).

If however the context turns out to be North Sea oil, then the rendering will incorporate something like

> 40° latitude nord.

If again it turns out that all these hypotheses as to context are mistaken, there are other possibilities. One which will no doubt have already come to mind is simply that of age, thus:

> passé la quarantaine

for, one might imagine, a Radio Three talk on the Seven Ages of Man.

In this instance it turned out that all my projected versions were wrong. It may be noted that they do all contain some term which is the equivalent of the number forty. However not even this assumption is necessarily justified. The correct rendering turned out to be simply

> de 6 à 8 degrés (Centigrade - though in French the 'C' would be superfluous)

for I had happened on the weather forecast, just as the announcer was reporting that minimum overnight temperatures would be in the mid-forties.

Context may of course encompass a wide range of matters. Another illustration will help to make this clear, again culled from radio, whose ubiquitous presence somehow confers an aura of authenticity.[1] The speaker is a lady being interviewed on the BBC's Today programme:

> These days you can't get on a bus at the top of the street, so I usually walk to the elephant.

Two contextual clues will probably suffice: she has a South London accent; and we know, from following news and current affairs at the time of the observation, that there are problems with London Transport and with British Rail Southern Region but the tube is running. One then need only insert the capital E to indicate that she means the Elephant and Castle underground station (and then only in the written version) and all is made clear.

The intrepid Martian, on the other hand, stepping from his spacecraft well equipped for his visit at the level of LK - with all the dictionaries of English ever published stored in his personal microcomputer, with its random-access memory, plugged into his capacious brain - could be forgiven for concluding, wrongly, that the British had adopted a novel mode of transport, hitherto found mainly in India and also used, a long time ago, by a person called Hannibal. Whereas, given the context, the problem disappears.

The point of this digression is that interpreting, as practised professionally or in the language degree course, is a prime example of context-bound performance. We can and do invent many role-playing situations to enable our students to practise oral skills, but each of these has to be set up, with suitable priming, whether it be the telephone call, ordering a meal or cashing a cheque, recounting, enquiring, describing, discussing or whatever. This approach has its drawbacks, not least in that it requires considerable ingenuity and imagination on the part of the tutor and on the part of the student; and each situation or scenario is liable to remain limited in scope and constrained by the context we have imposed.

Interpreting provides a ready-made role - always the same ('You are the interpreter') yet infinitely varied. It is obvious for example that it can readily be related to area studies or options, with the political interview, the economic discussion or indeed the literary conversation. One may involve the micro- or the macro-context (as could be projected from the above example), from the identity of the participants for whom the student is to interpret and the purpose of their meeting to the most wide-ranging country-specific or world knowledge. Once the context is established, the student, provided that he has a healthy curiosity about the world and takes the trouble to read the papers,[2] can then concentrate on comprehension and expression. Given that it is the interpreter's job to convey the spirit, the intention of the original

speaker's remarks, not only the dire (that which is said) but also the vouloir dire (that which is meant), it can be seen that he, like the famous lager, reaches those parts of the audience that the other speakers cannot reach. This calls into play all the qualities of communicative competence that we would ideally wish to inculcate, at least to the extent that students, including those who are unlikely to become professional interpreters, are able to express themselves confidently and competently in situations more relaxed that that in which the interpreter habitually finds himself. Such situations are also, incidentally, less constrained by context. It is here that it is wholly appropriate to see interpreting as contributing to the development of interpersonal skills, allied to the ability to switch language codes, which puts oral competence, including competence to express oneself in one's mother tongue, into its proper perspective. A student who knows that part of his diet is liable to include - if only in simulation - being required to act as interpreter for Pierre Mauroy will be at the very least more inclined not only to keep abreast of current affairs but to take note of recent pronouncements by the French Prime Minister and to familiarise himself with the basic principles of French socialism and the long-standing issues in French politics generally. Thus context doth make cowards of us all, for, as any working interpreter will confirm, one would much rather be informed beforehand on a topic that is likely to arise at the meeting than be caught unawares. The professional interpreter's wide-ranging curiosity about the world and all that it contains is surely a model worth emulating.

This mention of one of the (supposed) qualities of the interpreter brings me to the second of my two topics, that of personality. Here, to broaden the perspective, I should like to offer quotations from three completely unrelated sources.

The first concerns a view widely held of the two professions most obviously relevant to the language graduate (together with teaching), that of the translator and that of the interpreter. It is generally believed and frequently asserted that these two occupations attract (or require) persons of different personality or temperamental disposition:

> The two professions require different personality types: translating is a more introspective, reflective occupation, whereas for interpreting one has to be an extravert, at ease in a wide variety of social situations (Steadman, 1982)
>
> No one person is likely to make a good interpreter and a good translator. The one art calls for a bold, extravert exhibitionist and the other for a cautious, introvert perfectionist (Simpkin and Jones, 1976)

Few would disagree with these generalisations and indeed the majority of professionals questioned in the course of my own research into the matter confirmed the above view. In a survey of 65 professional translators and 35 conference interpreters all employed by international organisations in Western Europe, the stereotype view of each profession in terms of personality was clearly along these lines, with the single most frequent

feature mentioned by far being that translators tend to be introverted and interpreters extraverted.[3] A small minority only of respondents doubted whether there is such a wide difference between translators and interpreters or felt that it was perhaps exaggerated.

If the stereotype view is indeed correct, it clearly has implications for our teaching. This is true whether or not we are concerned with producing future professionals (and as teachers of undergraduates such is certainly not our sole aim or even a major one) simply because it is something we must take account of if we are to use translating or interpreting as part of the learning process. There has been relatively little research on the relationship between personality and learning styles, but some of it is of interest here. One study of schoolchildren found that:

> ... children high on extraversion learn better by listening, while the introverts do better by reading (Cattell et al, 1970)

This is not on the face of it a particularly surprising observation, but it is food for thought if considered along with the research evidence about the personality of university students. Here there is some evidence of a positive correlation between degree class and moderate introversion together with a moderate level of anxiety, i.e. the somewhat introverted and anxious student is, it seems, more likely to get a good honours degree than his extravert, unanxious colleague, other things being equal. If it needs a 'cautious, introvert perfectionist' to make a good translator, then we need at the very least to be aware of this in our approach to teaching languages.

To take the question of personality a stage further, it is appropriate to consider the teacher as well as the student. The following, from a work on psychometrics, is a comment made in the context of educational assessment, though the point clearly applies to language learning:

> What is needed is ... more highly concentrated studies that attempt to account for the correlations - for example studies of the behaviour of teachers and students measuring the interaction with personality-test scores. Then it might be found that certain methods and procedures enable pupils of given personality configurations to perform well and that these methods are employed most effectively by teachers of certain personality patterns. (Kline, 1983).

This at least indicates possible directions of future research.

The claim made earlier that personality has implications for the way we teach or, more importantly, the way our students learn oral or other language skills was prefaced by the phrase 'if the stereotype view (of e.g. the professional translator and the professional interpreter) is correct ...' The

research project in which the survey of attitudes of 65 translators and 35 interpreters was conducted also investigated the personality of the respondents. With a view to discovering whether their stereotype views were confirmed by objective personality measures, each subject completed a personality inventory test, the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), a test widely used for such purposes and devised by Raymond Cattell (see e.g. Cattell et al, 1970), one of the leading exponents, with Eysenck, of the scientific measurement of personality. Detailed results of the analysis of 16PF scores will be published elsewhere, but extracts are presented here in summary form.

It was confidently expected that the personality questionnaire would indeed confirm the stereotypes. As it turns out, the difference is much less than might be expected. On the major personality dimension of introversion v. extraversion, for example, the mean score for the 35 interpreters shows them to be somewhat more extravert than the mean for the 65 translators, but the overlap between the two samples is very substantial. A number of interpreters appear to be more introvert than the average translator and vice versa, ie. a number of translators appear more extravert than the average interpreter. Similar results are obtained on a second major dimension, that of anxiety. Some interesting differences do however emerge, in that, for example, the translators score significantly higher than the interpreters on a rudimentary test of intelligence. This result was quite unexpected and clearly needs further investigation, though a provisional explanation may be found in evidence that translators are good at and enjoy problem-solving tasks, such as crosswords. IQ-type questions are of a similar nature, which may partly explain the difference in scores. It is moreover possible that the translator tends (more than the interpreter) to be a convergent thinker. IQ tests tend to correlate with 'convergence' (see e.g. Heim, 1970). It is also of course possible that translators really are more intelligent.

When the above results are compared with 16PF scores for a large sample of UK undergraduate students in arts and social sciences (Saville and Blinkhorn, 1976), again the most striking feature of the comparison is the high degree of overlap. The sample of translators are, it is true, seen to be more intelligent, somewhat more sober, apprehensive and self-sufficient than the students. The interpreters appear rather more assertive and imaginative than the undergraduates. Both groups, compared with the students, appear more conscientious, suspicious and tense. But the extent of the overlap is such that the two occupational profiles, of translators and interpreters, do not differ from the observed personality profile of British undergraduates to anything like the degree that might have been expected.

The extent of the overlap between translators and interpreters on the measure of introversion v. extraversion may be gauged from Figures 1 to 4. Figure 1 represents the distribution on a STEN ('standard ten') scale of the sample of UK undergraduates in arts and social sciences reported by Saville and Blinkhorn. Their scores are here converted to a scale ranging from 1 (extreme introversion) to 10 (extreme extraversion), with the mean set at 5.5 and the standard deviation at (plus or minus) two 'stens', i.e. the great

majority score between 4 and 7. This middle band of subjects is represented by the shaded area and acounts for some two-thirds of the population, with relatively small minorities, about 16% in each case, scoring low (1 to 3) or high (8 to 10).

When the scores for the sample groups of translators (Ts) and interpreters (Is) are converted to the same standardised scale, one might expect the difference between them to appear as in Figure 2, with Ts on the left (introversion) and Is on the right (extraversion). The extent of deviation from the mean shown in Figure 2 is somewhat arbitrary - from the stereotypes we can simply expect the Ts to be 'more introvert' and the Is 'more extravert' - but deviations of the magnitude shown are reported, in Cattell et al (1970), for numerous occupational groups on several personality traits.

The observed difference is shown in Figure 3, for the 65 Ts and 35 Is sampled. This figure, which like the others is drawn to scale, clearly shows substantial overlapping. The difference observed is statistically significant only at the 6% level. It is thus a good illustration of the dangers of supposing that statistical significance also means substantive significance. There would for instance be little to be gained from observing an individual subject's score (unless it were extreme) on this scale alone if one wished to predict his future career or even advise him. (More complex statistical methods, in particular discriminant analysis, which takes into account all sixteen personality factors, do however, have some predictive power.)

Finally, Figure 4 displays the overlap by superimposing Fig. 3 (the Ts and Is as observed) upon Fig. 1 (the undergraduates).

Greater differences would no doubt be observed if the comparison were made with reference to other norm groups, eg. the general adult population. The Ts and Is are all professionals, of graduate or comparable status; and of course both groups are linguists.

Two conclusions which arise from these results are worth noting here. Firstly, it is sometimes asserted that interpreting is such a specialised language activity, requiring an unusual type of person, that it is unreasonable to expect undergraduate language students to tackle it, or alternatively that it should be confined to the privileged few, in the form for instance of a final year option. While the findings of this piece of research do not of course refute the assertion (no amount of statistics can ultimately prove a case, but merely strengthen the evidence for it) they certainly fail to support it and indeed give grounds for doubting it, in so far as it is based on personality. A second conclusion is that we may need to revise our view of the interpreter (and the translator) - what I have described as the stereotypes - at least in respect of their supposed personality characteristics. These conclusions presuppose that my samples of subjects were typical of their professions (a contention which I have not the space to argue here, though the whole research design was directed to that end); and that the 16PF is indeed capable of measuring personality (for which claim there is an enormous mass of published evidence by many people over many years, documented in e.g. Cattell et al. (1970)).

However, even if it were true that the two activities of translating and interpreting are so very different as to require inter alia a different temperamental disposition or personality (though the evidence fails to support this) there would still be a case for expecting students to taste both. The (stereotype) superficial extravert with the gift of the gab will benefit from being required to tackle the problems of translation, which need painstaking perseverance and a concern for accuracy. The (stereotype) introverted, thorough, deliberate, bookish individual will benefit from being required to concentrate very hard, respond quickly and spontaneously and communicate verbally.

As to the interplay of learning styles and teaching styles mentioned by Kline, I do not suggest that we should all subject ourselves to personality tests, though the experience can prove enlightening. I do however suggest, given the fair degree of overlap on most personality traits among the practitioners, that we - that is, academics with practical experience of translating and interpreting - can probably adapt our teaching of different skills, e.g. oral and written, to the appropriate learning style. Failing this, some of us in a language-teaching team will find one activity more congenial than the other, will thus teach it better and should therefore tend to specialise. There is a place for the multi-purpose language teacher and for the specialist.

Finally, I am mindful of the opinion expressed to me by the late Thadé Pilley, who believed - impressionistically, though with the authority of his fifty years of experience as a conference interpreter - that the interpreter possesses an unusual combination of characteristics: he is generally outgoing, socially at ease and eloquent, but also painstaking, perfectionist and capable of intense concentration. These are qualities which we should be only too happy to find, or to nurture and encourage, in our own students.

NOTES

1. The dramatist of the absurd, Arthur Adamov, describes in one of his prefaces his habit of eavesdropping, on buses and in the street, enabling him to collect 'des bribes de conversation dont le caractère décousu garantissait l'authenticité'.

2. As a brochure produced by AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) puts it, 'pour être interprète, il faut être intelligent et connaître le monde'. (Necessary, though again hardly sufficient conditions.)

3. This survey is reported in detail in Henderson (1980).

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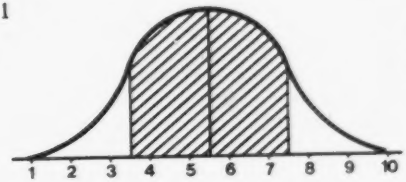
Figures 1-4

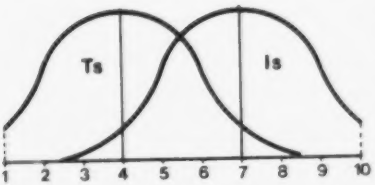
16PF higher-order factor Introversion (low scores) v Extraversion (high scores) in stens

Figure 1



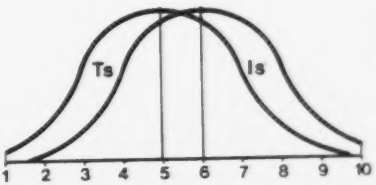
British undergraduates, arts and social sciences (N = 683) after Saville and Blinkhorn. Shaded area = 67% of total.

Figure 2



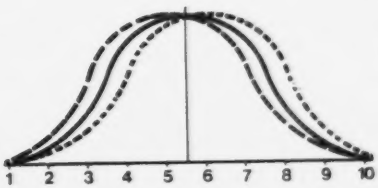
Hypothetical ("expected") distribution for 65 Translators and 35 Interpreters. Mean scores 4 and 7, ie - and + 0.75 s d.

Figure 3



Observed distribution for 65 Ts and 35 Is. Mean scores 5 and 6, ie - and + 0.25 s d (t-value 1.57; p 06).

Figure 4



Undergraduates ——————
Translators — — — —
Interpreters -------

THE EVALUATION OF ORAL/AURAL SKILLS WITHIN THE BA FINALS EXAMINATION: ANALYSIS AND INTERIM PROPOSALS

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At a time when advances are being made at the pre 16-plus level and when universities are endeavouring to diversify the range of skills practised in their language courses, there has been very little discussion or published research on the structure of the finals oral examination. The status of the oral test as a finals paper remains high; yet with certain notable exceptions such as the experiments with interpreting, its format within the context of the BA course has rarely been seriously questioned. Neither has there been extensive debate about the necessary interdependence of a more communicatively based curriculum and the assessment of oral proficiency, as distinct from other communicatively based skills.

Nonetheless, several generally recognised features of current developments within foreign language teaching might be thought to make such a debate desirable. Among these, one should mention in particular the move towards more 'task-orientated' language learning within higher education, the likelihood of pupils' increased exposure to oral approaches at secondary level, the need to produce teachers who are fully proficient in oral/aual skills, and, more generally, a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo. The Bradford conference has therefore provided a timely opportunity to carry out a mise au point which, for the converted at least, probably requires no further justification.

Once embarked upon, a reevaluation of the principles and techniques of oral examining at 'finals' level demands an investigation of four main areas of concern:

1. the shortcomings of present procedures.
2. the theoretical controversy surrounding the design and even the value of oral proficiency tests which has arisen primarily out of research in the area of EFL/ESL teaching.
3. a proposed test model applicable within the current framework.
4. the relationship between such a test and an integrated language curriculum.

1. PRESENT PROCEDURE

It is in fact by no means clear that the present format of the finals orals examination is intrinsically deficient. It is acknowledged (Wilds, 1975) that a candidate's overall language proficiency can be orally assessed as effectively in five minutes as in thirty. It is even suggested (Callaway, 1980) that an

untrained native speaker, basing his judgement principally on 'accent', is as reliable an assessor as a trained examiner who systematically analyses the different components of oral performance. No doubt these findings confirm the long-held suspicions of many experienced oral examiners that the test is often unnecessarily extended. But to accept the above findings at face value is to overlook some of the limitations inherent in the experiments concerned. It also means making the very questionable assumption that the purposes of the tests in the US are no different from those of the British finals oral examination; strictly speaking, this is not the case. Callaway's 1980 experiment at Southern Illinois University was based only on reading, and the gauge of overall proficiency was limited in validity; Wilds' 1975 assertions, tentative in scope, applied to tests devised by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) for implementation by all US government agencies. They were designed as proficiency tests and were largely syllabus independent.

The conditions governing a university finals paper are different; under these circumstances the oral is more than a proficiency test. It should be designed in such a way that its 'backwash effect' motivates students to practise and develop their oral competence in a variety of registers in order to perform a specific set of tasks. Irrespective of the findings mentioned above, the nature of the oral paper and the teaching and design of the course itself should be seen as an interrelated question.

From the point of view of its interrelationship with the curriculum, the present finals oral examination is almost entirely 'open-ended', consisting as it generally does of a reading passage followed by a discussion on a variety of unspecified subjects. As outlined, its design does not reflect performance objectives nor does it provide guidelines for practice or tuition. The intrinsic drawbacks of what can be referred to as the 'standard oral test' (SOT) are generally recognised, if not openly discussed. The first of these is its potential **unreliability**; as far as I know, no controlled experiments correlating oral performance levels and overall language proficiency, or comparing the assessments of individual and paired examiners (cf Mullen, 1980 and Dyson, 1972) have yet been carried out in this country at post-secondary level. Research currently being untertaken on behalf of the DES by Peter Dyson of the Language Teaching Centre at the University of Oxford promises to fill what is, at present, a serious lacuna.

One doubt about the SOT's reliability derives from the different degrees of emphasis placed on individual factors of oral performance: accuracy, fluency, accent, content, personality, phatic authenticity, register variety, lexical variations, comprehension and so on. An easily recognisable source of divergent judgements relates to content. Certain oral examiners are known to have preconceptions about what ought to constitute the domains of knowledge covered by a university education regardless of whether these have formed part of the course. It is not always obvious that the knowledge demanded should necessarily have impinged on the student's experience. This is not simply bad examining; it is a defect in the design of the test.

The SOT's **validity**, 'direct' or 'indirect' is also open to question. Clark (1975) has defined a language proficiency test as

any measurement procedure aimed at determining the examinee's ability to receive or transmit information in the test language for some pragmatically useful purpose with a real-life setting.[1]

There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that many university candidates find it all but impossible to hold authentic or meaningful discussions of complex philosophical or literary issues in an examination. For those who do, the highly successful ones, the question of their ability to transfer their competence to the 'real-life setting' does not arise. But for the remainder, there is no obvious relationship between coursework, test, and the 'pragmatically useful purpose' for which they should theoretically be able to use their linguistic skills.

Fuller analysis and discussion of the problems involved in oral testing are required. It should then be possible to establish a basis for devising more self-evidently reliable tests. If such tests also had greater 'face-validity', there seems little doubt that they would have a more significant effect than at present on course design, student motivation, and patterns of learning.

2. AREAS OF THEORETICAL CONTROVERSY

Following Alderson (1981), it can be said that the first main area of contention in the evaluation of oral proficiency concerns the relationship in test design between theory and content, between **construct validity** and **content validity**. Need the design of an oral test conform to features imposed by a given theory of language? To argue that it must is to argue in favour of **construct validity**. For example, a proficiency test which was 'construct-validated' in terms of a transformational-generative model of language might include a reading test which compared examinees' levels of comprehension after reading two texts with two distinct degrees of embedding. On the other hand, should a proficiency test not be validated in terms of its **content**, that is should it not reflect the 'real-life' features of the proficiency it seeks to assess? As Alderson puts it: 'The question is whether tests are mirrors of reality or **constructed** instruments from a theory of what language is.'[2]

Alderson subsequently resolves the problem by arguing that tests measure **performance** regardless of their underlying theoretical presuppositions. Yet the fact remains that many oral tests, including the FSI interview test and the British GCE 'A' level oral examinations are at least in part rooted in construct validation. The GCE oral examinations for example specify that certain syntactic structures should be tested and that the candidate's overall performance be assessed accordingly. This section of the test is valid in relation to a structural theory of language. The same is true of the recommendation that controlled interpreting be used in the FSI interview to verify knowledge of points of grammar.[3] Elsewhere in this test, however, content validity takes the upper hand. Evidently, construct validity and content validity are not mutually exclusive within the same test; but at least their distinctness as validation procedures is preserved. The problem with the SOT is that the test is valid in neither area.

The question of 'content' or 'face' validity is based on the predictive value of the test, its relationship with the future experience of the candidate. This is a central issue to which we shall return. At the same time, as we have seen, the issue of a test's **predictability** or **unpredictability** refers backwards to the course itself. Predictability has two facets, both of which affect course design. The first of these concerns content. It appears obvious that an oral test should assess material which has been included in a programme of study. Yet the 'SOT' frequently only includes general instructions such as those that questions may be asked about the dissertation that forms part of the degree or about books on the course.

The second aspect of the question of predictability concerns test design itself. It would seem to be a logical feature of design that the format of a test should reflect the structure of the activities which have made up the course. In many courses which already include built-in forms of oral activity, such a situation already exists: the test design provides guidelines for rehearsal which are congruent with a range of communicative functions. This is simply not the case with the majority of courses leading to the 'SOT'. The conversation class or ancillary oral activities, taking place on the periphery of the course, often not carefully monitored by comparison with formal language classes, are the only preparation for the oral exam.

Whereas predictability can be said to cover design and overall content, the ability to cope with unexpected questions (speed of reaction, appropriacy of response) is clearly a basic and equally important feature of communication and should be expressly included in any comprehensive test rather than being present as the incidental accompaniment of a loosely structured interchange. As well as being an essential characteristic of oral interchange included in classwork, the **'unpredictability factor'** contributes by definition to the test's 'face validity'.

The discussion surrounding the relative merits of **construct** versus **content** validity is of course only an extension of the more far-reaching controversy between the so-called 'componential' or 'discrete point' and 'unitary' or 'integrative' theories of language testing. It is clear that this argument has ramifications involving the process of foreign language acquisition itself, which the focus of this paper demands that we leave unexplored. Suffice to say that the designer of an alternative oral test at finals (or at any other level) inevitably has to face the question of whether the test should measure individual factors of performance (the 'atomistic' approach) or whether the examiner should rely on an 'integrative', even an 'intuitive' assessment of the candidate's oral ability.

The term 'discrete point' is susceptible to a narrow and a broad definition (Oller, 1979). In its narrow sense discrete point testing focuses on 'one point of grammar at a time'. If such is the aim of the test, oral interview is a very inefficient way of achieving one's objective. Generally for the purposes of oral testing, the term is interpreted more broadly as meaning linguistic components of oral performance. The division into categories of the FSI oral interview test: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, has

become recognised as the 'classic' example of a working compromise between discrete point testing according to its broader definition and a pragmatic approach.

Given the right conditions - properly trained examiners who are flexible and insightful in implementing the FSI instructions - there is no doubt that the componential approach advocated by the FSI has tangible advantages: proven reliability, a degree of construct validity, economy, and also 'generalisability' which Mothe describes as 'la mesure de la compétence langagière dans sa globalité.'[4]

However, apart from the evident vagueness of the terms 'fluency' and 'comprehension' as independent categories of performance, the very principle of the so-called 'divisibility hypothesis' has increasingly been questioned as a sound basis for increasing a test's reliability,

In addition to the findings of Callaway (1980) referred to above, a range of recent experiments give support to a 'unitary' rather than a 'componential' view of linguistic competence which is demonstrated (Scholz et al, 1980) by the high correlation between the results of tests related to individual skills and the collective results of eighteen different tests. As a result of their findings, Scholz et al posited a 'g' factor representing general language proficiency. They found, moreover, that it was difficult to relate any particular groups of tests to specific skill factors. Each factor had a significant correlation with a wide range of different tests. As Scholz et al concluded:

> No clear pattern appears in which tests are grouped according to the posited skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, or components of phonology, lexicon or grammar; the data seem to fit best with the unitary competence hypothesis; and the divisible component hypothesis is thus rejected.[5]

This view re-echoes Hendrick's et al comment that 'there is no evidence that the several FSI scales are measuring different skills or components of oral proficiency.'[6] So efforts on the part of oral examiners to achieve greater objectivity by 'factorising' oral tests in relation to specific features of competence seem to be misguided.

What is evident, however, in the nature of this conclusion is that the categories on which these experiments were based are, to a large extent, rooted in **linguistic knowledge.** They do not include the multiple pragmatic factors which govern the successful accomplishment of a communicative task (personality, coherence, use of accompanying material, complexity of content, etc). In short, the tests concerned do not evaluate performance skills; rather they assess only certain aspects of the proficiency which makes performance possible. As we have seen, even in the case of the FSI interview, the subcomponents of assessment: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, are for the most part formal rather than pragmatic.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the FSI interview is more painstakingly designed than the SOT. The question is: does this make it a better test? The outcome of the controversy outlined above suggests that the answer may well be 'no'; even unplanned flexibility of content may be just as efficient a basis for assessment as the FSI's planned shift from informal discussion to professional interchange. The argument for extending or redesigning the SOT cannot rest simply on the urge to break down oral proficiency into linguistically based components. If an alternative approach to oral interview in the final examination is thought necessary, it needs to have an alternative theoretical justification, reflecting course design and based on pragmatic principles of validity.

3. FUNCTIONAL CRITERIA, COURSE OBJECTIVES AND TEST DESIGN

Having rejected the 'divisible' or 'componential' approach to oral test design based on linguistic criteria, it is tempting to seek justification for an alternative standpoint in what can be termed the authentic fallacy; given the constraints of examination procedure, how can an oral test replicate real life, and if it can, what aspect of real life should it represent? Both Alderson (1980) and Partington (1980) demonstrate the vacuity of the first part of this problem. An oral test does **not** seek to re-create the life outside; it is an authentic situation in its own right, the enactants being examiners and examinees. The test is not authentically validated by role-adoption but by **criterion-referenced content**, that is the tasks and interaction delineated for the test should incorporate functional elements which are transposable to another reality. This reality should in turn reflect the performance goals of the course as a whole. The functional elements correspond to a finite set of communicative needs and skills, themselves distilled from a potentially infinite range of authentic situations. For example the design features of part of an oral proficiency test for political analysts would be based in the first instance on a careful analysis of the expository and interpersonal elements in political discourse. These elements would then define the structure of a variably controlled interchange recognised by both participants as an examination situation. In this way, both 'generalisability' and 'predictive validity' can as far as possible be guaranteed, without false claims being made about the test's 'one to one' relationship with real life.

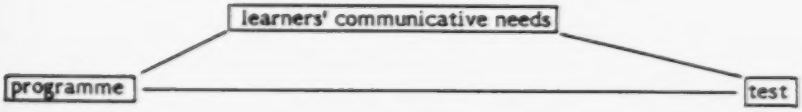
It follows that the principal aim in designing an alternative oral is to shift the emphasis from underlying features of competence or 'enabling skills' to functional components which define the successful, or unsuccessful, completion of a communicative task. The problem then becomes one of isolating such functions from a range of real-life tasks, building these into the language course, and designing a test which covers a range of functions which is representative of a more general oral proficiency.

At the same time, the obvious difficulty of separating linguistic 'enabling skills' from factors of performance is that performance is to a large extent evidenced through language. 'Appropriateness' and 'comprehensibility', for example, as factors of performance will rely heavily on 'accuracy' and 'accent'. To carry out communicative tasks beyond a certain level of

complexity depends inevitably on the prior acquisition of specific language skills. However, the successful completion of these tasks depends also on other, more pragmatic factors. A formal presentation may involve French which is entirely accurate, spoken with a perfect accent; but if the argument lacks coherence or relevance to the aims defined by the context, or if the language is too high-flown, esoteric, or alternatively, too casual, the communicative act has failed.

Primacy should, then, be given to the specification of 'functions', ie to stating exactly which features of communication are necessary for certain tasks to be successfully performed. The theoretical framework which best represents this relationship between context, function and linguistic realisation is that of Halliday (1973). Halliday suggests that within a given culture there is a finite set of 'situation types'. Each situation sets up a range of functional choices which are only at a further, final stage, realised in terms of grammatical structures.[7] The situation type 'meeting' for example gives rise to a whole range of definable initiatives and responses which may be more or less socially appropriate according to circumstances. These in turn involve linguistic choices with quite different syntactic structures. Bonjour, salut, ça va? Permettez-moi que je me présente, vous vous appelez? Ca fait longtemps qu'on s'est plus vu, etc. Within the context of a model of this kind the term 'function' can thus be defined as a speaker's communicative intention independent of the situation, even though the social or psychological constraints inherent in the context of any discourse inevitably narrow down the number of functional choices normally open to the individual participants. The task of the oral examiner, like that of the course designer, is therefore to identify a number of contexts or 'situation types' and a representative range of functional alternatives open to speakers in the light of what he feels to be the aims of the course.

It is quite clear therefore that if pragmatic tests of this kind are to be 'valid' without being 'situation tied', and if they are to have 'instructional value' that is an appropriate retroactive effect on teaching approaches, their format is to a large extent dependent on course objectives. Before designing an oral test at finals, it is essential to decide what the aims of a major degree course in French should be in terms of oral proficiency. This axiomatic principle, so often taken for granted or overlooked where the SOT is concerned, is clearly expressed by Brendan Carroll's diagram below:[8]



What are degree students' oral/aural communicative needs? Within the context of a major BA course of study I would define them as follows:

(a) Receptive

- formal report or objective theoretical analysis by an individual of a technical, moral, social, or political issue.
- formal discussion, debate at a given level of theoretical complexity.
- informal dialogue on everyday issues of personal concern between educated people (including narration of past events based on personal experience, personal opinions, feelings, etc)

The medium of reception would either be read text, audio recording or audio-visual media.

(b) Productive

- objective analysis: narration, description, analysis and evaluation of social, political, economic, literary, historical phenomena, assessment of their moral significance, exposition and evaluation of a theoretical, moral or technical problem.
- summarising/gist reporting of event or of analysis of contemporary or past issues.
- expression and analysis of feelings and personal impressions.
- appropriate initiation and response in formal and informal personal interaction.

(c) Interpreting

- an ability to translate orally at different levels of formality in order to facilitate communication between monolingual speakers of French and English. Naturalness and verisimilitude suggest that casual interpreting of this kind be consecutive.

In the light of course objectives such as these, the following oral exam formats could claim to be reliable, valid and economical:

(a) Oral/aural summary (two internal examiners)

- The exam, conducted in the language laboratory, consists of gist reports of two pieces of recorded oral French lasting three minutes each.
- The gist reports themselves should not last more than one minute.
- Fifteen minutes are allowed for each piece: ten minutes for listening and note-taking and five minutes for recording the students' own gist summary.
- Of the two pieces of recorded French, one should be an objective report or formal discussion, one a dialogue involving a more casually interpersonal and everyday problem.

Students should be marked impressionistically on a scale of 1 - 5 corresponding to standard degree classes with examiners paying particular attention to the following criteria:

- clarity and comprehensibility
- factual accuracy

- coherence
- appropriacy of vocabulary and idiom
- conciseness
- lexical variety
- syntactic accuracy.

(b) Oral interview (two examiners, one of which should be an external)

- The oral interview which lasts between twenty-five and thirty minutes comprises three distinct phases corresponding to three different types of context of discourse and giving rise to largely different sets of functional components.
- The students should have about twenty minutes to prepare a brief formal presentation on one of a limited set of topics which they would not know in advance but which would be related to material covered during the course. A very limited set of documentary information can also be supplied to provide a factual basis for the students' presentation.
- The interview should open by an exchange of pleasantries lasting for several minutes if necessary, to put the candidate at his/her ease.
- Phase 1 (five to eight minutes)
The student can refer to brief notes if required but should on no account read from a continuous text.
In the absence of a satisfactory theoretical definition of the term 'function' it is inevitable that there be differences in detail between individual examiners as to the precise set of functions implied by the task of a formal presentation and as to the relative importance ascribed to each. While not claiming to be comprehensive, the list below does seek to set out specific criteria to which examiners can give attention and which for students imply verbal techniques and linguistic knowledge that can be taught.

For Phase 1 of the oral interview, we are therefore seeking to evaluate in a global sense the following aspects of a student's performance:

> coherence, persuasion, expression, explanation, definition, description, emphasis, deduction, verification, modification, comparison, generalisation, introduction, argument, conclusion.

All these functions can be directly related to various aspects of language: on a general level comprehensibility, lexical variety and syntactic accuracy and, more specifically, such features of code as impersonal verbs, linking expressions, the strategic use of nominal and verbal constructions, appropriate use of the subjunctive, the position of adjectives, etc. At the same time, however, particular care should be taken to avoid the meaningless

regurgitation of stock phrases which are not appropriate to the argument or to the coherent development of content.

- Phase 2 (five to ten minutes)
  The second phase of the interview involves a formal discussion of the issues raised in the presentation. The examiner asks questions which demand that the candidate modify, define, defend and justify his/her own points of view. This phase of the test is therefore a test of formal interpersonal communication. The candidate should show an ability to agree or disagree with the examiner within the formal norms of polite discussion, to concede certain points, but adhere to others on the basis of rational argument. An ability to imply and infer would be a further feature of communicative behaviour which this phase of the test would seek to evaluate.

- Phase 3 (five to ten minutes)
  This phase of the interview focusses on the candidate's own personality and individual likes and dislikes, hopes and fears. It seeks to evaluate his/her powers of self-expression in the foreign language. The functions implied by this final stage of the interview might include:

  > self-identification, narration, the expression of intention, hope, regret, fear, affection, satisfaction, hesitation, scepticism, etc.

  Clearly the kind of linguistic knowledge demanded during this phase includes among other things an appropriate range of verbs of feeling and adjectives and in particular an ability to manipulate tense and mood.

Each phase would be marked impressionistically by each examiner out of 5 during the test and at the end a set of three marks each out of 5 agreed on. Together with the two marks from the oral gist test, the aggregate gives a total out of 25. The likelihood of parity between pairs of examiners is increased by internal examiners changing places at half-day intervals and thereby moderating obvious differences in level between externals. In the light of the conclusive evidence of Mullen's (1980) investigation into rater reliability, it is commonsense to ensure that oral interview tests are conducted by a minimum of two examiners.

In addition, it is worth noting with regard to courses in which consecutive interpreting plays a significant part, that it is relatively simple to introduce this activity into phases two and three of the above exam format, provided of course that the two examiners are temperamentally able to suspend their knowledge of one of the two languages for the purposes of the exam. This technique is already current in the FSI interview, though in that instance it is mainly used as a means of eliciting vocabulary and syntactic structures.[9]

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAGMATIC TESTS AND THE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

If finals oral tests reflect certain course objectives it is logical that they should also corroborate language activities carried out during the course. Indeed the attendance and interest shown in oral approaches at the Bradford conference is a measure of the feeling that the emphasis of language courses in higher education should shift in the direction of oral skills.

Although it is outside the scope of this paper to consider questions of teaching methodology in any detail, developments in approaches to oral evaluation and the design of the test which has been presented above presuppose learning activities which arise out of tasks tackled collectively by small groups and which lead to oral as well as written performance.

Regardless of the nature of the content: commercial case study, a current French socio-political issue, an everyday moral or personal problem encountered in France or elsewhere, we would propose as one possible methodological framework an approach involving three stages:

1. Analysis
2. Enaction
3. Exploitation/consolidation

The approach is best summed up by the schema below:

Stage 1: Analysis. Students work in groups of 5 or 6 on a range of material: documentary, audio-recorded, audio-visual, relating to a specific theme. They note vocabulary, carry out written commentaries and exercises and, particularly where audio-visual material is concerned, complete questionnaires. Using one of their own members as an interpreter, they also address questions to a native speaker on the topic under consideration using the documentary input as a point of departure.

Stage 2: Enaction. This involves the preparation and performance of the principal oral output; a problem or scenario is conceived by students and elaborated with roles being ascribed within the group. At both Stages 1 and 2 writing is an integral part of the group's activities and complements the build-up to the oral enaction which constitutes the main goal of Stage 2. This latter invariably includes an element of formal presentation and interpreting can also be built into the enaction at this stage.

Stage 3: Exploitation/consolidation. This Stage takes the form of follow-up written exercises: translation, summary, report writing, letters, etc, carried out individually rather than in groups and assessed according to traditional precepts of accuracy and stylistic appropriateness.

STAGE 1: ANALYSIS		
Input: Film (10 minutes) TV document (10 mins) written texts	Student activity: linguistic and cultural analysis in groups of 5-6; interpreting	Output: written commentary summary syntactic/lexical exercises; completed questionnaires

STAGE 2: ENACTION		
Preparation: research scenario production	Performance: 25 mins approx recorded on audio or video tape	Evaluation correction/marking of tapes

STAGE 3: EXPLOITATION/CONSOLIDATION	
Written exercises: translation letter report summary, etc	Evaluation: content coherence fluency lexical variety accuracy

The amount of time devoted to a single complete cycle of this kind depends on the organisation of the institution concerned. Within the context of a university course involving two formal language classes per week, the whole process covers approximately one month. Under more intensive learning conditions, it could obviously be completed much more rapidly.

The success of the approach is dependent on an extended and collaborative relationship between teacher and student. The students need to be psychologically prepared for the demands which independent group work and recorded enaction place on them. A build-up of at least four weeks through traditional exposés, simple improvisations and interpreting exercises is needed to bring committed university students to the point where they are ready to take on responsibility for their own course. The period of habituation will clearly vary according to the age and ability of the students concerned and to other external factors affecting course organisation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of proposing an approach in which pedagogical responsibility is largely transferred to the learner and greater place is given to the spoken language has been to illustrate the necessary inter-relationship between the content and learning activities of BA language courses and a more carefully designed final oral examination. The recommendations below are therefore put forward in lieu of a conclusion as suggestions which, if adopted (as many of them already have been prior to this conference), would surely be applied in different ways by different institutions. Hopefully however, these varied responses would reflect a common concern that the teaching of oral French should receive greater attention than at present within the standard structure of the BA modern languages degree:

1. Increase weighting of language in general to 50% of the marks awarded for French with the finals structure.

2. Extend the oral examination to 30 minutes. This should include:
   (a) presentation based on a briefly prepared topic,
   (b) formal question and answer and/or interpreting exercise,
   (c) general personal discussion.

3. Introduce an additional oral paper explicitly to test receptive and oral summarising skills.

4. Ensure that there are two examiners per student for the oral interview with internal examiners acting as moderators by changing at regular intervals.

5. Integrate the skills practised in the exam into formally assessed coursework.

6. Where possible, devolve responsibility on to students for the exploitation of materials, enaction and evaluation.

NOTES

1. CLARK, John L D: 'Theoretical and technical considerations in oral proficiency testing' in Jones and Spolsky (eds), Testing Language Proficiency, Arlington, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975, p 10.

2. ALDERSON, J Charles: 'Report of the discussion on communicative language testing' in Alderson and Hughes (eds), Issues in Language Testing, ELT Documents III, British Council, 1981, p 56.

3. 'If the examinee successfully avoids certain grammatical features, or if the opportunity to use them does not arise, or if comprehension and fluency are difficult to assess, the testers may use an interpreting situation appropriate to the examinee's level of proficiency. In languages in which testing is relatively infrequent or in which either the interviewer or the examiner has difficulty in spontaneous role-playing, a set of bi-lingual dialogues is often prepared and written down for this purpose.' FSI Testing Kit, US Govt, 1979, p 6.

4. MOTHE, Jean-Claude: 'Evaluer les compétences de communication en milieu scolaire', in Le Français dans le monde, 165, novembre-décembre 1981, p 64.

5. SCHOLZ, George et al, 'Is language ability divisible or unitary?' in Oller and Perkins (eds), Research in Language Testing, Rowley Mass, Newbury House, 1980, p 33.

6. HENDRICKS, Debby et al: 'Oral proficiency testing in an intensive English language programme', ibid, p 85.

7. HALLIDAY, M A R: 'An amorphous and indeterminate set of 'uses of language' is partly reducible to generalised situation types, the social contexts and behavioural settings in which language functions. For any one of these situation types, we seek to identify a meaning potential, the range of alternatives open to the speaker in the context of that situation type; these are expressed as semantic networks within which meaning selections are made. The options in the semantic network determine the choice of linguistic forms by 'pre-selection' of particular options within the functional components of the grammar.' Explorations in the functions of language, London, Edward Arnold, 1973, p 101.

8. CARROLL, Brendan: Testing communicative performance, Oxford, Pergamon, 1980, p 5.

9. See 3 above.

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HAS THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY A PLACE IN THE UNDERGRADUATE LANGUAGE COURSE?

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A survey carried out in 1979 by the C.N.A.A. into the resources available in Higher Education for the teaching and learning of foreign languages concluded that "although considerable value was attached to language laboratories, there were, paradoxically, many reservations about their effectiveness, much evidence of under-use, and a tendency to revert to more conventional teaching as the language course progressed". The identification of such a paradox was important. In spite of its alleged ineffectiveness, the language laboratory is still felt by many to possess a potential which remains, as yet, unexploited. For some reason this particular technology has never managed to establish itself as more than a peripheral feature of advanced level teaching in universities and polytechnics, even though most of the latter are equipped, or have access to, laboratory facilities, often of the most sophisticated kinds.

One explanation may lie in the fact that most of the published language courses containing a laboratory element have been designed for work at sub-degree level - a situation which will hopefully change during the next few years following the publication of the First Year Course in French by the Scottish Universities, although the laboratory element in that course appears as an adjunct rather than as a core element. Another explanation may be that advanced language courses are, by their nature, individual concepts reflecting the aims and convictions of the institutions which devise them. There has also been, especially during the sixties and seventies, the struggle of new approaches to find their place alongside traditional, or conventional, techniques, and the need to re-formulate principles of methodology in the fields of language acquisition and linguistic theory. A pilot attempt to rationalise the place of the language laboratory in courses at degree level is long overdue, although it is probable that precise descriptions may well be valid only in respect of the particular courses to which they relate. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest some possible lines along which this might be done; it is not the intention simply to list the various kinds of activity which, as is known from experience, can provide valuable contributions to the strengthening of certain linguistic skills, and which are often introduced at some point into teaching programmes. The assumption is that the language laboratory can - and ought - to offer opportunities for teaching and learning which, for the spoken language at least, cannot be provided elsewhere with the same economy of time and effort.

An attempt at rationalisation is prompted also by the current popularity of video and computer-assisted learning, which themselves offer new perspectives for language teaching, with a correspondingly significant

demand on time, talents and money. This trend alone emphasises the need to consider systematically, and with greater care than in the past, the functions of existing technology in language centres, about which there is insufficient information at the present time. It is reasonable to suggest that decisions to install language teaching plant for the next decade should be based not upon the wish to increase prestige - as was sometimes the case in the past - but upon sound research evidence of usefulness, and upon the clearly perceived needs of language teaching and learning methodologies agreed by staff in particular departments or institutions. This supposes that coherent philosophies of language teaching and learning will have been elaborated to suit particular circumstances. If this were the case, it would present a marked contrast with the sixties when, in spite of tremendous enthusiasm and activity in Europe and in America, interest in the language laboratory waned as it became increasingly evident that four-phase drills could not provide the necessary variety or replicate 'real' language situations: that the hardware was, in fact, much less important that the software, which demanded for its compilation far more time than could be made available in busy departments. Also, the sustained effort required when concentrating on speaking performance was exhausting - for the teacher as well as for the student.

A major stumbling-block to progress has also been that the investigations which have been carried out into the effectiveness of the laboratory have been focussed largely at sub-degree levels, with mixed results. In America research involving school and college populations suggested that using the language laboratory as part of a teaching programme had been beneficial in respect of improving listening comprehension, 'set' dialogue participation and structure drills, but that the approaches used in the laboratory classes had not, on balance, been significantly more effective than 'normal' classroom techniques - a conclusion endorsed in this country by the York experiment. It is not, therefore, surprising that the history of the language laboratory has been marked by what Ornstein described in 1971 as 'a long chronicle of innovation followed by high optimism, followed in turn by disappointment'. In the universities large-scale experiment was missing. Important results might have emerged from investigations based on the requirements of particular language courses, in which the laboratory had been allocated a specific role, standing in the same relationship within the methodology as any of the other teaching aids available, including blackboard and chalk. The problem is that the existence of such explicitly formulated methodologies for language teaching in the universities is doubtful. However, the groundwork must be done if the logical place of the laboratory - or its rejection - is to be determined. The efforts and experiments of the sixties became obsessed with the potential of the machines to improve those linguistic skills which demonstrated the more obvious advantages of using a tape recorder, with the result that experiments to investigate the wider potential of the laboratory did not take place. The result was that the limited skills application became isolated from all other aspects of language learning. The approach stemmed directly from the popularity of structure drills and contributed significantly to the decline which eventually set in, and from which the reputation of the language laboratory has never recovered. The failure to transfer the same types of exercise to more advanced stages of language learning also

reinforced a feeling that the laboratory was only really useful during the early stages.

The time is ripe for university language departments to take a close look at their teaching. The call for greater emphasis to be placed on communicating skills applies as much to degree work as to other language courses. What is needed is a fundamental reappraisal of the aims of the courses themselves, this would then be followed by the construction of firm metholologies for each, in which the technological aids would have a clear contribution to make. In spite of contributions stemming from work in linguistics, university language departments have been rather slower to respond to progress than they might have done; it is, indeed, strange that considerable investment should have been made in installing expensive plant - often on a large scale - without major research activity on the part of the practitioners. Here again history presents a disappointing picture. As early as the sixties warnings were sounded that only rigorous research would provide the key to the proper development of the new instruments. Carroll (1963) called for projects which would encompass whole language courses, along the lines indicated above, each designed for specific purposes, rather than experimentation centred on isolated skills. A research team at the University of Nancy (1968) endorsed the plea - 'the existence of the language laboratory compels us to reconsider all our preconceived ideas, and to evolve methods adapted to this new technical instrument. The role of the laboratory as an educational instrument will only develop with the progress of research'. The implication is clear: only in the context of a complete re-thinking of course structure can the correct place of the language laboratory be found in a valid, coherent methodology.

That research does not appear to have been directed along such global lines was probably due to the over-emphasis on producing, as quickly as possible, exercises along Skinnerian lines to reinforce particular skills. The most serious consequence of this kind of approach was not only that people gradually lost interest; it was the failure, during the sixties and seventies, to formulate a coherent theory of language laboratory use, or to construct a general methodological model. Nothing has crystallised in spite of a great deal of work in many isolated corners of the university and polytechnic world. Efforts must now be concentrated on bringing the various pieces of the puzzle together; a willingness to co-operate across institutions would pay dividends.

Perhaps the most cogent reason for the absence of a coherent pattern of use lies in the distinction which must be drawn, methodologically, between 'initial' and 'advanced' work. The language laboratory has often been assigned a prominent place in the early stages of learning, where drill and structure activities of the 'traditional' type tend to predominate. The real difficulties of incorporating the language laboratory into the methodology start with post A-level courses, and continue at all stages of degree work, when the development of the student's linguistic competence and performance assumes a rather different approach. Skinnerian 'imitation' must be transformed as quickly as possible into Chomskyan creativity. It is here that a clear understanding must be reached, in the design of the course as a whole, about

what constitutes language teaching at this level, and about what constitutes language learning. In terms of the methodology, language teaching is to be defined initially as comprising those activities directed by and carried out in the presence of a tutor; language learning as comprising those activities which are capable of being carried out by the student himself. In order to create a distinction of this kind, a clear statement of what is meant by 'teaching the language' and 'learning the language' is essential. The distinction is paramount, not only because the question of the 'programmability' of language at more advanced stages of language learning is involved, but also the processes by which the target language is learned, and its interaction with the mother tongue. Whatever theories about these aspects are adopted, it is important that informed decisions are made at the theoretical level about the possible ways in which the advanced student develops his knowledge of and performance in the target language, and that the results of such decisions should form the basis of the methodology to be developed. This constitutes one major way in which research in Applied Linguistics, especially in the processes involved in encoding and decoding language, should be contributing to the design and realisation of suitable teaching and learning materials for advanced courses conceived as coherent wholes.

The need to provide a clear view of language upon which courses and methods can be based is accompanied by the fact that in advanced work it becomes progressively more difficult to consider separately aspects which are purely linguistic from those which are not. For example, skill-training exercises often associated with laboratory work involve extra-linguistic factors, in the sense that the desired performance, although requiring use of the language, depends upon capacities which reflect rather the intellectual level of the student. Thus, listening comprehension exercises which call for the production of a summary of what has been heard, or which demand the presentation of selected opinions or arguments, are not, technically, strengthening exclusively linguistic skills; nor do they primarily teach the latter, although because they involve linguistic performance, they constitute worthwhile activities. Recognition of this could open up new possibilities for investigating language laboratory use. In practice, it is possible to confuse the issue: for example, by assigning greater prominence to the linguistic aspects of the exercise, which does not help the student who is good at language but weak in the analytical skills involved. Predictably such a student might perform less well linguistically as a result. The language laboratory might , in the scheme of things, offer opportunities for activities in which the spin-off is linguistic, although the aim is centred elsewhere. This avenue is ripe for investigation.

Critics of the language laboratory have usually concentrated their attacks on the artificiality of the range of exercise-types which have tended to dominate, and which often reflect conflicting views about the nature and function of language. The growing insistence on 'communicative language' has not helped. Within the global view of language and language learning adopted as appropriate for their purposes by the teachers concerned with a particular course, there must be a clear idea about the degree to which the

language can be 'programmed' at this level; the various exercise-types should embody the ideas about language underpinning the course as a whole. On the other hand, like Jakobovits, we would reject the view that exercises, of whatever type, should be avoided simply on the grounds that, in the light of some theory or other, they are inadmissible, if such exercises can be seen to work. However, the question of the 'programmability' of the foreign language beyond the early stages must be resolved, if progress is to be made. It is here that investigations could most usefully take place. Spolsky pointed the way: 'the serious problem of programmed foreign language instruction occurs at the two points at which both taxonomics, linguistics and Skinnerian psychology have least to offer: the point at which one goes from form to meaning, and the point at which one wishes to deal with novel combinations of units'. Thus we are confronted by the fundamental question of what we mean by 'teaching the language' in our courses, and by the need to come to grips with the distinction which must be drawn, as explicitly as possible, between 'basic structures' - seen to be the nuts and bolts of the target language, which increase in volume and complexity as the student progresses - and what might conveniently be called 'creative production'. Once the distinction is drawn, experiment might indicate the methods of setting up suitable conditions for encouraging the transition from one to the other. We must discover what must be 'supplied' in the learning materials and in the teaching techniques in order that 'internalising' of the Chomskyan type can occur firmly and progressively. Along with this experiments could be conducted to determine the extent to which the technical instruments, including the language laboratory, can provide the sorts of stimulus and environment necessary to facilitate the subsequent progress towards individual 'creative' expression. The first important steps would thus have been taken towards integrating the machines into a clear methodology. Creating new situations in which newly-acquired structures/language can arise spontaneously is difficult. What is suggested is that work inside and outside the laboratory should be organised systematically, in accordance with a precise scheme, the laboratory aspect forming an essential part of the whole, rather than a bit 'added on'. This implies a clear understanding of what, in such circumstances, the laboratory can contribute to the learning process. It also requires the greatest amount of flexibility in the teaching spaces provided, since, ideally, the machines would be available at the precise moments they were required during a class.

One avenue of approach to the question of 'programmability' was provided by Wilga Rivers in the distinction she drew between 'open' and 'closed' levels of language. The latter include 'language elements which occur in fixed relationships in clearly defined closed systems' (i.e. they will vary between very narrow limits), the former 'a level of expression of personal meaning, at which possible variations are infinite'. The first level would, for the present argument, include parctice drills of various kinds aimed at encouraging the development of good linguistic habits; the second would probably take place outside the language laboratory. Another way would be to build on the work done in the sixties by Margaret Hilton at Birmingham and Denis Ager at Salford, which described and examined open-ended laboratory approaches, in which the subsequent exploitation of the language learned there took place in

a seminar room. To these might be added the work carried out in Bradford during the early seventies by a team investigating the possibility of constructing a first year course in French on communicative lines.

The main need, therefore, is to identify, then to describe as precisely as possible the kinds of contribution the language laboratory could make to the teaching/learning process. This, in turn, depends as much upon general theories of learning as upon theories of language and language acquisition. The place of cognitive theories, especially in relation to adult-learning processes and strategies, is important; the processes involved in learning the foreign language must be considered within the wider context of the other kinds of learning which occur in degree work. It is as well, also, to remember that students have certain expectations about the nature of the work involved in university study, especially in respect of the intellectual content of the challenges presented to them. This is sometimes expressed in the distinction which they make between what they call the 'linguistic' side of their course and the 'non-linguistic' one, seen as corresponding to their literary, political, economic, social, or historical studies. It is to the latter that they often ascribe, wrongly, the greater part of the intellectual contribution they must make. The ways in which they absorb, handle and process information and ideas, in English and in the foreign language, should, therefore, be studied. Language courses, in so far as they are often conceived of separately from the other elements of study, must establish as a high priority the narrowing of the gap between the intellectual aspirations of the student and his linguistic competence. It is also vital that decisions are taken about the desirable ratio to be established between the teaching and the learning aspects of the process. The newer language courses have, understandably, laid greater emphasis on the need for tutor/student contact in their shift towards developing greater proficiency in performance in the spoken language; in the enthusiasm to set up new patterns of working, sight was perhaps lost of the fact that undergraduates are capable of - and should be expected to - work independently. In reviewing their aims and methods linguists must consider carefully the need to transfer to the student, albeit under careful guidance, greater personal responsibility for the development of his linguistic competence and performance. The role of the language laboratory will, again, come under scrutiny, as a main source of self-help at particular stages in the course. This is not to say that class contact hours should be drastically reduced; it suggests, rather, that consideration should be given to devising courses in which the available technology can be harnessed more effectively and more economically than at present. Such a proposal involves a great deal of work, in devising and testing suitable materials for guiding the student.

Accepting the proposal would, as an immediate consequence, have the effect of moving away from mainly teacher-based activities to learner-based ones. The shift of emphasis would simultaneously compel a reappraisal of the role of the tutor in the language course and allow the language laboratory to be viewed from an entirely different angle: its function as a teaching aid would have to be differentiated from its function as a learning aid. The result might well be the decision that the principal benefits it offers at degree level

lie in its exploitation as a self-study facility. The links between these complementary teaching and learning functions should always be apparent to tutor and student, so that the machines are seen in a clear perspective as a means to an end. The shift away from predominently teacher-based to learner-based situations reflects a trend which has been apparent among linguists for some time; it also changes dramatically the angle from which the laboratory has been traditionally viewed. For example, in making materials aimed at improving performance in reporting orally texts which are heard, it is useful to distinguish between

(a) materials designed to teach or to strengthen the necessary analytical/synthesising skills,

(b) materials designed to improve linguistic performance in the register involved, and

(c) practice texts for reinforcing learning, and allowing student and tutor to monitor performance and assess progress.

The distinctions rest firmly on discussions about the complementary aspects of the teaching and learning processes which operate in each instance. They also call for the study of the place and functions of the machines.

In more general terms this underlines the need to take a fresh look at the language laboratory from both angles which may, or may not, be complementary, depending on the circumstances:

(a) as a sophisticated teaching aid at the service of a tutor, and

(b) as a private-study resource, to which the student has free access for individual work assignments, listening practice, remedial and reference work, or to enjoy listening to a wide range of recorded materials.

One way of establishing criteria for examining the laboratory in this way would be to consider what, in a methodology of language teaching, working in the booths should do, as distinct from what it can do, at every stage of the course. The central point of this would be a fundamental scrutiny of the rôle of the tutor in the learning process, since a description of those activities which are more conveniently carried out in the laboratory, automatically compels the discovery of those for which the presence of a tutor is necessary. An attempt to describe fully the latter sorts of activity is to be welcomed. The laboratory would then be closer to finding its positive place in the methodology as a whole. These would provide a clear indication of what could be expected from its use, and a better understanding of why it can or should be used for some purposes and not for others. Wide cooperation between institutions would, in addition, provide valuable information about laboratory use within course structures, which might, eventually, contribute to the formulation of the general theory of use which is at present lacking. However, in all circumstances, the use of the language laboratory should, at every point, be tightly integrated into the course design. Attention must

move away from the isolated exercises of the past towards systems of language learning/teaching which stand as wholes, and in which different institutions realise their own descriptions of the rôles the technology can play in terms of their own aims and convictions. The distinction between the learning as opposed to the teaching function is, therefore, crucial, because it is clear that, in advanced work (apart from specialised activities such as interpreting) the first one may very well turn out to be more useful than the second. This has implications not only for the kinds of material which need to be supplied, but also in the provision of suitable work facilities. This concept has, hopefully, been realised in the new Modern Languages Centre at Bradford.

Assessing the laboratory as a teaching aid centres on the rôle of the tutor during a class. The nature and methods of monitoring student activity have always been difficult to describe satisfactorily. It would seem useful to attempt to classify the activities for which the presence of a tutor is

(a) essential
(b) desirable
(c) unnecessary.

In addition to determining those occasions upon which it is felt that the tutor must be present, the exercise would, more significantly, focus attention on his rôle during the class. Such enquiries would help to clarify the ways in which 'monitoring' can help student and tutor. Perhaps this is the key to useful progress.

One consequence of an analysis of this kind would be the need to take a close look at the kinds of laboratory resource required in order to realise the demands of the selected methodology. The clear identification of the strengths and limitations of the machines as learning and teaching aids would lead, ultimately, to the need, in an ideal situation, to make a distinction between fully-equipped language teaching rooms, with audio-comparative facilities, where the layout, as here at Bradford, would offer the greatest possible flexibility for varied teaching styles, and language resources rooms equipped with individual facilities for listening and working. Such provision would highlight the distinction drawn earlier between teaching and learning functions. The creation of resources rooms is probably most important for the future development of the rôles assigned to the technology. A comfortable, attractive audio library should constitute one of the main attributes of a Modern Languages Department, offering, in respect of the spoken language, the same kind of source as the library provides for the printed word. To spend time listening should be no less 'natural', no less 'useful', no less 'expected' than reading a book. It should certainly be no less enjoyable. It is nurturing the attitude which matters. The language laboratory viewed purely as a teaching device would probably be somewhat demoted in such an arrangement, but it would, at least, be perceived in a proper perspective as a teaching aid. Incorporated properly into a teaching programme, it stands to enhance the somewhat tarnished reputation it now enjoys. A move towards more individual work assignments would also acknowledge the need of the advanced student to work alone more freely and more creatively with the machines than has hitherto been the case.

A teaching experiment carried out at Bradford during the early seventies exemplifies some ways in which the ideas presented in this talk can be implemented. Two examples from this experiment will now be described; they have been chosen because they offer distinct, but interlocking, parts of a First Year course in French strongly weighted towards the development of communicating skills. The strategies sought to embody the ethos of the degree course as a whole, and endeavoured to exploit to the full the teaching aids available. The examples presented here inserted into the wider plan at specific points. Whether the interdependency of the elements composing them would provide a starting-off point for the construction of more general models able to be applied to other situations is another matter; there is insufficient evidence to decide. Greater cooperation between institutions might well provide it. However, the examples demonstrate one way in which the machines can play an essential role in course design.

Example I: Guided Conversation.

(a short, intensive period, which formed the first two weeks of the language course).

5 contact hours each week, organised into small group work and individual assignments.
The 'package' formed the introduction to the language course, and had three distinct aims:

i) to develop confidence in understanding and using spoken French;

ii) to emphasise, from the start, the importance of accuracy in the spoken and written forms of the language;

iii) to begin the systematic training of the student to make maximum use of the machines; this involved stressing the need to understand clearly the point of every task he was asked to perform.

The methodology sought to throw into relief the complementary roles of the language laboratory and the audio workroom in 'taught' and individual work, and to explore the limits as well as the potential of each function; it soon become clear that the preparation of efficient self-help materials demanded impressive amounts of time and imagination. It became equally obvious that the tutor had to discover new ways of using his time productively in the laboratory sessions.

The materials themselves were concerned with the student's transition into university life, and comprised three topics around that theme:

i) **L'arrivée à Bradford** (requiring an anecdotal approach);

ii) **Ma ville** (requiring a descriptive approach);

iii) **Premières impressions de la vie à l'université** (requiring a more 'abstract' approach).

The topics were presented in two forms:

i) a small number of **key questions** were posed, which formed the basis for individual practice and group work; instructions were provided for each exercise and activity;

ii) recorded discussions by two or three native speakers using the same key questions; the recording sessions were unscripted, but some 'pre-editing' ensured that the discussion followed appropriate lines.

These quite lengthy recordings were used simultaneously with work under (i):

a) for strengthening listening comprehension, using work booklets, and for providing 'authentic' samples of ways in which some native speakers dealt with the topics. Implicit in the approach was the conviction that the starting point for comprehension must always be texts which, at this stage of the student's development, will provide the models he needs. In the methodology the greatest care was taken to use all the teaching and learning resources to bridge the gap which undeniably exists between the formal study of the code, on the one hand, and the putting into practice of the features learned, on the other. The language laboratory and audio-workroom were able to play an important part in the transition. Another problem which arose in this context was how to achieve the necessary balance between the repeated 'correct answer' and a 'free' approach. Any open-ended question involves the possibility of an open-ended answer (Ager, 1969); in listening comprehension exercises, should a 'suggested' answer appear on the tape? The solution which emerged in the investigation was that, in the language laboratory, the student must be trained to make use of the facility for calling the tutor, since providing a 'suggested answer' is one way of giving the student opportunities to check the appropriateness and acceptability of the linguistic form and also the informational content of his reply.

b) for examining features of spoken language in certain situations. Stretches of the dialogues were analysed in class, and a 'vocabulary' of speech-markers characterising the performances was compiled - interjections, hesitators, ways of asking questions and interrupting, uses of **alors, donc, eh bien, et puis** etc. The student was encouraged to use this knowledge in his own audio-workroom attempts to improve his own presentation of the topics in various forms. As well as starting off a training in analytical skills, the set of exercises was valuable in that, although he was using referential material in his individual work, the student was constantly thrown back onto his own resources; he could not simply copy the dialogue on the tapes, since the ideas and experiences of the native speakers were different from his own. It was in this kind of work that the importance of Ager's suggestions became most apparent; the need to devise varied kinds of 'free' follow-up language activities became paramount.

c) for orientating the student towards a real concern for accuracy, using transcription exercises of various kinds. A full transcription of each dialogue was available, and immediate self-correction stipulated, with a listing of the errors made. Parallel to this were exercises involving the transcription of the student's own efforts at presenting the topics. He would work at this until he felt satisfied with his recording. The transcription was seen by the tutor and discussed:

(i) as a piece of genuine spoken language
(ii) as a correctly written record of what had been said.

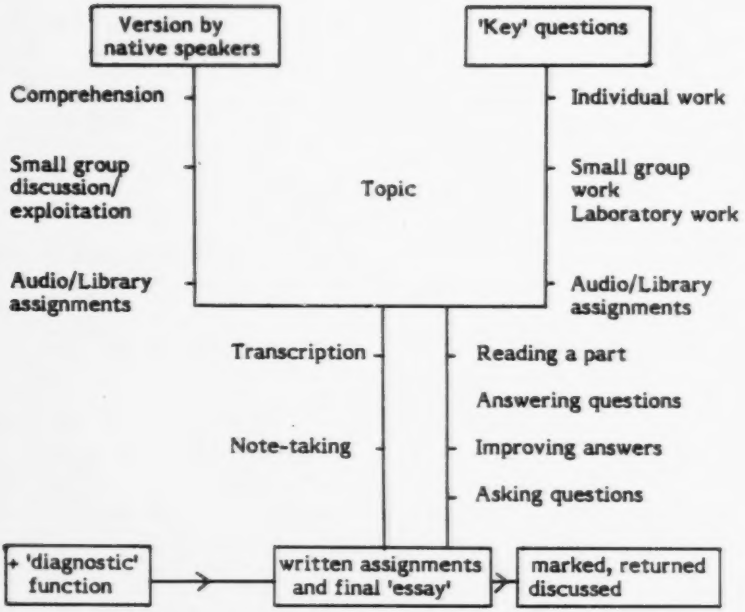
It was expected that, since the activities were identical, a similar attitude would prevail during the transcribing process. There was encouraging evidence that this occurred.

d) for practising reading aloud. Attention was focussed on selected features of intonation, in preparation for a systematic treatment of pronunciation and intonation at a later stage. The exercises involved 'reading a part' from the dialogues, 'shadow reading' for pacing and the repetition of selected utterances from the texts. This work was mostly done in the audio-workroom.

Three interesting conclusions emerged in respect of this 'package': in the first place, precise instructions were needed for each exercise if it was to be used successfully; secondly, individual work in the audio-workroom or group work in the laboratory demanded precise follow-up activities at every stage; thirdly, the balance between 'repeating' and 'open-ended' type exercises was crucial. It was also very clear that the decision to train the student in the use of the facilities was vital; maximum benefit depended largely on his understanding the point of what he was asked to do. In the past this aspect may not have received all the attention it deserved.

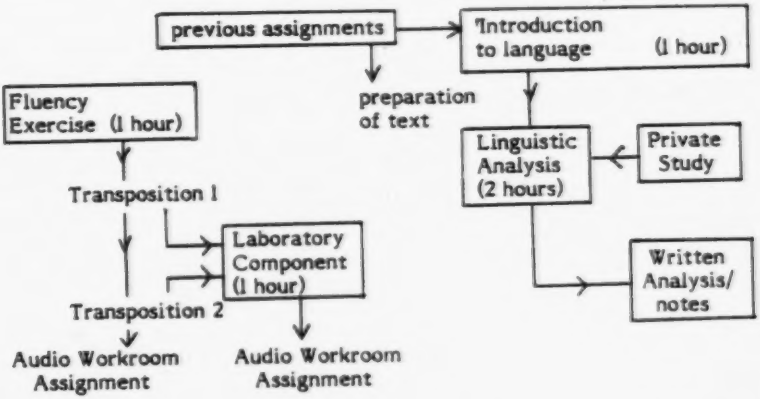
Towards the end of the fortnight, time was given for drawing together the three topics in discussion; the students were then asked to write (not, this time, work orally and transcribe the result) an essay about whether their initial reactions on coming to Bradford had changed. This was marked and returned; some were read out in groups and compared.

The diagram shows the ways in which the activities of the 'package' were fitted together.


Version by native speakers
'Key' questions
Comprehension
Individual work
Small group discussion/ exploitation
Topic
Small group work
Laboratory work
Audio/Library assignments
Audio/Library assignments
Transcription
Reading a part
Answering questions
Note-taking
Improving answers
Asking questions
+ 'diagnostic' function
written assignments and final 'essay'
marked, returned discussed

Example 2: More formal language work

After a further short period devoted to strengthening aural and oral skills using different techniques, linguistic analysis of texts was introduced. This was intended to build on the start made in the elementary analysis of the dialogues during the introductory fortnight, in conjunction with a course in General Linguistics. The texts, spoken and written, were selected from a wide range of registers, and provided sharp contrasts. The diagram illustrates the kind of interaction which was worked out for this stage of the course.



Study booklets were written for each text and its accompanying activities for guiding preparation in the audio-workroom and the library; for each text a recorded reading was made, and students were encouraged to recognise suprasegmental features which affected meaning. At every point an effort was made to produce activities which ensured the continuous development of the selected skills, and which were mutually reinforcing. Again, it was clear that even the traditional types of 'formal' work could be enriched by matching up the different strategies which could contribute to successful learning. This kind of study is essential if the technology is to earn its keep.

It is thus clear that the language laboratory, if given the chance, could make a larger impact than it does at present on teaching at degree level. Research remains the key. With sound projects, vigorously pursued, the technology could earn its keep more significantly. There is evidence that interest has been re-awakened in the language laboratory; it is to be hoped that the rival attractions of C.A.L. and video will not direct attention from it.

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Part two

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1

HOW 'MODERN' IS THE MODERN LANGUAGES DEGREE?

Chairperson: Dr D Place, University of Newcastle

Rapporteur: Mr Erik Correwyn, University of Antwerp

The workshop found it difficult to define what the term 'modern' means. A short paper was presented by Mr D Marsden about the needs for linguists in the Civil Service, and Mr J Adams (Huddersfield) explained why more linguists are needed in industry, especially for translation and interpreting work. He also pointed out that combinations such as Law and French and Marketing with French are helpful. However, Mr G Williams (Swansea) indicated that very few professional linguists are needed annually and, therefore, a clear distinction should be made between language and skill acquisition. Professor Tilford stated that knowledge of languages is the main capital of any young person, whereas a profession can be chosen later in life. Dr D Place (Newcastle) posed some questions regarding the teaching of humanist culture in universities. What is meant by this term and how is it presented to students? Is the year abroad given too much importance as regards perfection of language skills? Would bi-or even tri-national education be more successful and useful? What is the use of 'O' and 'A' level examinations and of the newly created Certificate Grade 2 examination?

Mr Williams agreed with Professor Tilford that loss of talent often occurs, as the ablest potential linguists take other courses (especially Economics in the early seventies and now Sciences). Where Modern Languages are concerned, the number of male students is decreasing, especially in French and Spanish; Russian and German are still more popular with boys.

Languages constitute an area of study where different disciplines meet, and this in itself is sometimes a problem. Which University should the potential student choose? How great is the pressure of the school's direction of this choice?

Workshop paper

THE RELEVANCE OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF DEGREE COURSES TO WORK INVOLVING THE USE OF LANGUAGES IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE. D C Marsden, Civil Service Commission

Most undergraduates in degree courses in modern languages 'want to use their languages' either professionally (as full-time linguists) or at least in part vocationally (in support of other skills). In Britain's Home Civil Service (including departments of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) other than the Diplomatic Service) there are only a few dozen posts annually, and in the Diplomatic Service there are no posts of the first kind; but many posts of the second kind are filled annually in both the Home Civil and Diplomatic

Services. Recruitment to posts of both kinds is by open competition arranged by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) or, occasionally, by employing departments acting under delegated arrangements. In addition, many members of the HM Armed Services are required to have linguistic competence of the second kind. The CSC has no responsibility for recruitment to the Armed Services, but it is responsible for conducting language allowance examinations for serving members of the Armed Services, as well as for serving members of the Home Civil and Diplomatic Services.

Recruitment to full-time professional civilian linguist posts is to five main groups:

i. the Linguist Specialist Class in the Joint Technical Language Service (JTLS) in Cheltenham;

ii. the Linguist Officer Class in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in London;

iii. the Translator Class in FCO and some half dozen other departments in London;

iv. Burnham Scale Lecturer posts in various FCO and MOD teaching establishments; and

v. interpreter posts in HM Immigration Service, including the Appeals Secretariat, in London and elsewhere.

For all these posts competence to good honours degree level is essential. Although the majority of candidates are graduates, equivalent qualifications in the appropriate language(s) are acceptable instead of a degree as a condition of entry to the respective competitions. The most commonly offered such qualifications are the Final Diploma of the Institute of Linguists and, for serving or ex-members of HM Armed Services, the CSC Navy, Army, or Air Force Interpretership.

For almost all posts in the Linguist Specialist Class candidates must be competent in a Slavonic or oriental language, the languages most often required in recent years being Arabic, Persian (Farsi), Russian, and Turkish; but for a few posts competence in modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish is required - normally in two of the three Romance languages among these. In recent years there have been, but in the foreseeable future there are unlikely to be, posts requiring competence in French and/or German. About 30 posts annually are normally filled. The work mainly involves transcription, translation, and research in a wide range of technical and other subjects. Aural transcription tests play an important part in the selection process.

For the Linguist Officer Class candidates must be competent in one or more languages in addition to English. These may include specified Slavonic or oriental languages, but West European languages are sometimes required, including French and German either in combination with each other or with

another language. Only two or three posts annually are normally filled. The work includes the written translation of material (mainly of a technical nature) from, research into publications and other material in, and conference interpreting from and into, foreign languages. Although only a few of those appointed will undertake conference interpreting duties, the selection process includes tests of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting for those wishing to be considered for such duties.

For the Translator Class candidates must be competent in at least two languages - normally European - in addition to English. The most commonly required combination is French and German. About half a dozen posts annually are normally filled. The work consists mainly of translation of relevant material into English. Oral competence is not normally tested during the selection process.

For Burnham Scale Lecturer posts candidates must have a native or near-native command of the foreign language in question, which the successful candidate is required to teach to serving personnel. Arabic, French, German, Russian and Spanish are the languages most commonly required. For most posts, a postgraduate teaching qualification and relevant teaching experience are required. About half a dozen posts annually are normally filled. The selection process normally includes tests of consecutive interpreting.

For Interpreter posts in HM Immigration Service candidates were in recent years required to have a native or near-native command of Arabic, Persian (Farsi), or one or more languages of the Indian sub-continent. Successful candidates interpret and translate as required at appellate hearings and at airports and seaports. Only one or two posts annually are normally filled. The selection process normally includes tests of consecutive interpreting.

In the published conditions of eligibility for all these professional linguist posts, the CSC makes no distinction between different kinds of language degree courses, provided that the language/s required have been studied as components and that candidates who have already graduated have attained any minimum class of honours that may be specified. In Russian and occasionally in other Slavonic or oriental languages where there may be a large number of posts available in relation to the number of candidates expected, a class of honours is not normally specified, and final-year undergraduates may normally apply. In West European languages, with many candidates applying for relatively few posts, at least second-class honours are normally specified, and final-year undergraduates are not normally eligible to apply. The 'modernity' or otherwise of the degree course plays no part in determining whether a candidate is invited to the CSC written examination. The prime purpose of the latter is to select for interview (immediately preceded by oral/aural tests where appropriate) those candidates who are most likely to have the best mixture of linguistic achievement and potential, leaving assessment of the required personal qualities to the final interview stage. The written tests themselves comprise translation (and sometimes editing) of material of a fairly general kind taken from political, diplomatic, economic, and scientific texts.

Successful graduate candidates for full-time linguist posts come from a wide range of universities and CNAA degree-awarding establishments. A modern vocationally-oriented undergraduate course may help to give candidates a knowledge of current international affairs that will stand them in good stead in the written tests, but many candidates from the more traditional type of undergraduate course also do well in these tests. The prototype of the successful candidate is one who has taken a literature-based first degree, followed by a postgraduate degree or diploma in translating or interpreting, and who has some experience as a stagiaire with one of the EEC institutions or as a staff translator in commerce or industry.

Recruitment to posts of the second kind defined in the first paragraph above is through the appropriate open competition. For Administration Trainee, DS Grade 8, and other 'fast stream' posts filled through the Appointments in Administration scheme, a degree with at least second class honours in any discipline is required as a condition of eligibility for appointment to the 60 or so posts available annually. Final-year students may enter. For appointment as Executive Officer a degree is not essential, although about half of those appointed in recent years to the 2000 or so posts filled annually have been graduates, a degree in any discipline being acceptable. For appointment to most occupational groups and professions a degree or other qualification in a relevant discipline is required. There are many opportunities for those serving in administrative, executive, scientific, and other professional posts to make occasional - and often substantial - use of their knowledge of languages in furtherance of their work.

Such opportunities occur in the Home Civil Service, at headquarters level, in the many departments whose work is influenced by the UK's membership of the European Communities, and, at local level, in the departments - notably the Home Office Immigration Service and HM Customs and Excise - dealing with overseas visitors to, and immigrants domiciled in, the UK.

All members of the Diplomatic Service, throughout their careers, are encouraged to develop their linguistic achievement and potential and to become proficient in the languages of the countries in which they serve. Following tests of linguistic aptitude during the recruitment process and after appointment, many are selected to attend full-time courses in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and other languages before being posted overseas.

Members of the Civil and Diplomatic Services in the groups described in paragraphs 11 and 12 may qualify for language allowances by passing examinations conducted by the CSC in about 50 languages at standards ranging between GCE 'A' level equivalent and postgraduate level.

Workshop 2

AURAL-ORAL AND AURAL-WRITTEN EXERCISES

Chairperson: Dr P Hasler, University of Glasgow

Rapporteur: Mr M Townson, University of Aston

The discussion started with an attempt to define the context in which these types of exercise can occur: they can either be used as self-contained activities - under teacher supervision or for self-study purposes - or they can be used as elements in a wider integrative activity.

It was agreed that the initial aural stimulus would normally be on tape (with the possible exception of consecutive interpreting exercises, which, strictly speaking, also fall within this remit, but were not considered as they were being discussed elsewhere).

The evaluation of the aural stimulus can either form the main purpose of the exercise (as is, traditionally, the case with 'listening comprehension' tasks where the oral/written activities form the 'active' complement of the 'passive' listening mode, and are used to indicate the level of comprehension), or it can constitute an input, alone or with other verbal or non-verbal representations, directed towards producing a response (oral or written) which is the ultimate purpose of the activity. A third use which can be made of such spoken materials is a tangential one, in which the tape is used as a possible preparation for a subsequent written activity (e.g. 'prose' translating or written composition).

Various types of exercise were discussed for the first two modes, ranging from transcription and gap-filling exercises through factual and implication-type questions to formulating summaries and critical evaluations of the text heard.

Other types of exercise discussed included dictation, extempore translation (which can bridge the divide between written and spoken language, and, by providing a transition from written-written renderings, can lead on to interpreting), and note-taking exercises, which provide a preliminary to both short-term recall (interpreting) and longer-term recall exercises (summaries etc).

The session then proceeded to a presentation by Dr G Hare (Bradford) of his materials (Parlons Sciences-Po), the aim of which is to provide a task-oriented approach, using both verbal (spoken) and non-verbal stimuli (e.g. graphs) for students to re-create texts or to create texts analagous to the original ones. The materials used have been selected from political registers. Work is currently in progress on a project using materials related to the social sciences. The advantage of such materials is that students are encouraged to use language purposefully in a task which is immediately apparent (the verbal explication of non-verbal materials).

In the ensuing discussion, some doubts were expressed as to whether such materials were usable outside the contemporary society part of the curriculum. These doubts were however dispelled by pointing out that the materials were not excessively technical in nature and that the principles are generalisable: the aim is for students to make formal presentations in the foreign language, and a variety of non-verbal visual stimuli can be given, ranging from the fine arts to diagrams of road traffic accidents.

Workshop 3

AUDIO AND VIDEO SELF-STUDY COURSES

Chairperson: Professor N Thomas, University of Salford

Rapporteur: Mr D Hunniford, University of Buckingham

Discussion was prompted initially by the question of how such resources can be built into the tutorial programme of an undergraduate degree course, and how the sort of resources in evidence at Bradford University can best be utilised.

Each participant was invited to present his or her experiences and ambitions in this field. The type of equipment most highly favoured involved link-up of video recorder and computer systems (e.g. a video controlled by a computer). It was felt that the use of full-length foreign language films often proved to be demotivating because of the excessive amount of time involved. It was deemed essential to combine the use of video tapes/cassettes with carefully coordinated individual counselling sessions and further exploitations of the materials (e.g. in the form of brief rôle-playing or sketches).

TV films could best be utilised together with the support of scripts and, where necessary, glossaries of more difficult vocabulary and expressions. However, certain problems and drawbacks had to be considered, for instance, the inordinate amount of time taken up by the detailed preparation of video cassettes.

One of the most interesting areas of video work considered was the cultural/linguistic analysis of contextualised TV advertisements. Another was the use of a separate video monitoring room from which language activities such as simulated conferences could be scrutinised and subsequently analysed by students themselves (a method used successfully at present in the conference-interpreting laboratories at Bradford University). It was agreed that use of pre-recorded materials was highly desirable. Producing one's own materials was recognised as being time-consuming. The building-up of audio and video self-study resources was regarded as a key area in which the foreign language assistants could be effectively used. It was stressed that taped materials need to be carefully classified for optimal use by students. Various individual types of exercises and material sources were discussed, especially those suited to recording for self-study use, both as back-up of

normal language classwork and also entirely independently. Finally, it was agreed to be highly desirable for a firm link to be established between a self-help library of recorded cassettes and video tapes and diagnostic/correction work on the part of staff.

Workshop 4

COMPUTER-BASED SELF-STUDY AND SELF-TESTING MATERIALS

Chairperson: Mr Brian Farrington, University of Aberdeen

Rapporteur: Mr Gareth Williams, University College, Swansea

Two main questions were discussed:

(a) materials currently available in the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) field.

(b) the kinds of approach likely to produce the best results at undergraduate level.

A number of sample materials were brought to the workshop for demonstration, most of the participants having little or no experience of CALL.

The chairman first gave a brief introduction to computer-assisted learning, affirming his belief that we were on the verge of a new technology which was destined to become a normal and familiar part of education.

Ms Monique L'Huiller (City) then presented a paper on her own work in CALL in which she discussed the programs testing vocabulary and grammar currently available, and talked about her own materials, Logifrench (I). Since practice in the recall of new vocabulary and structures is of paramount importance, CALL can be of great value. Material should be presented attractively, preferably without mistakes, and the computer should both guide the learner to the right answer and involve his/her interaction.

Ms Huiller then mentioned the difficulties which vocabulary testing can create and raised the question of whether a program should include a 'hierarchy' of answers or all possible answers. She then outlined how the computer can be programmed to give instructions or supplementary information in a question or to show differences in word usage, to allow for lower case, superfluous spaces, added punctuation, and also to give a context or theme for each word or category of words. In referring to French Mistress, she drew attention to the fact that in this program the wrong word never appears; in this way the learner never sees a mistake on the screen. By contrast another program uses a star pattern to show the shape of the expected answer and the number of letters in the word.

The speaker then went on to describe her own work with Logifrench I, a program providing practice in the uses of the imperfect and perfect tenses. Slides were shown to illustrate the program.

Questions were then asked about Logifrench I and the validity of CALL systems generally in teaching syllabuses.

The chairman then briefly described his own program and its function, as well as his experience of using it. In 1 year CALL has been a compulsory part of the study of French at Aberdeen.

The programme devised by Mr Farrington presents texts derived from former Scottish SYS examination papers, a sentence at a time. The student's translation, if accepted, is built up word by word on the screen. The programme can backtrack to a mistake if necessary, as in 'sur le bicyclette'. Old examination scripts were collated to provide typical translations and mistranslations. In theory all possible variations of translation are provided. The machine can recognise typical errors and rejects atypical errors.

Some scepticism was expressed about the amount of attention undergraduates would give to VDUs once the novelty had worn off. Mr Farrington's experience was that students enjoyed the ludic element in CALL and study for as long as two hours (often in small groups) was not uncommon.

Mr Farrington's programme was compared favourably with Copywrite, a German language translation programme used at Coventry Polytechnic, which can accept only one correct version, and it was asked whether the programme might be extended to other languages and material. There is a pilot scheme for extending the programme.

Mr G Williams (Swansea) reported on the Gruneberg Linkwood programmes of instruction in basic Italian, French, German, Spanish and other languages, some of which will soon be available. The main novelty of Dr Gruneberg's programmes was that they combined the use of a key-word system of vocabulary learning with some elements of basic grammar and with repetition and testing of material in a context. The key-word system has been shown in many studies to be very effective as a tool for the learning of a basic vocabulary. Dr Gruneberg (who works at Swansea in the department of Psychology) had experimental proof that key-word system was made much more effective by the repetition of words learned in a context. Although the Gruneberg courses were aimed at a very wide market it might be possible to use the systems in some ab initio courses at university level. Some doubts were expressed about the standard of pronunciation obtained by such methods and about the superiority of such methods over other methods of learning a basic vocabulary.

Demonstrations followed. The general opinion was that CALL could save teacher time on some routine tasks.

Workshop Paper I

SOME RESULTS OF A RECENT INVESTIGATION INTO COMMERCIALISED CALL PACKAGES, AND A LOOK AT LOGIFRENCH, THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF PACKAGES ON CONJUGATION AND USE OF TENSES IN FRENCH Monique L'Huillier, City University

CALL is 'a form of tuition in which the computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement or assessment of material to be learned, usually including a major interactive element' (Graham Davies, Ealing College of Higher Education)

With this in mind, I would like to look at what learning a language means, and how the microcomputer can help, using examples from work which has been published and ending with a presentation of some of my own exercises.

If learning a language means a) understanding the concepts, and b) recalling new vocabulary and structures to produce meaningful utterances, we can see that for b) practice is of paramount importance, and this is where CALL can come in with testing and reinforcement material.

The material should be presented attractively and, if possible, without mistakes. One of the most interesting features of CALL interaction, is that it should include error diagnosis, positive reinforcement and review sequences, i.e. the computer should guide the learner towards the right answer when he makes a mistake. One program - French Geography Quiz, Corona - expected answers in English and would give half marks for answers in French or misspelt! Some correct answers in French, however, were not even accepted. No guidance was given about the correct answer.

Most CALL programs on the market at present test either vocabulary or grammar.

The main difficulty with a vocabulary test is ill-defined contexts (and sometimes no context at all). Words that are too commonly used (those that will normally have a page of alternative translations in a dictionary) should be avoided: e.g. 'great', 'nice' etc. Graham Davies quotes a typical bad example: 'What is the German for 'woman'?' Possible answers from the student include: Frau/die Frau/die Frau./Dame/DAME/Das Weib/das Weib/DAS Weib. The example raises the question of whether the program should allow for all reasonably possible answers, or even include a hierarchy of answers. This would be very useful in some cases, e.g. 'a pupil' - un élève/un écolier; 'a desk' - un bureau/un pupitre. Since this would only be a vocabulary test, it would then be up to the teacher in class to show the difference in usage between 'écolier' and 'élève', 'bureau' and 'pupitre', 'Frau' and 'Weib', etc.

Alternatively the program could introduce an example as a positive reinforcement. A typical routine might be: Student: un bureau. Computer: Yes, 'le bureau du professeur fait face à la classe' Another

possibility?Student: un pupitre. Computer: Yes, 'les pupitres ne sont plus guère utilisés aujourd'hui, les salles de classe sont plutôt équipées de tables'.

It might be more sensible to include in the questions more precise requirements, such as: a) say whether you want an article or not; allow upper or lower case, or specify which should be used at the beginning (this does not matter too much for French, but the distinction is essential in German); allow superfluous spaces (or specify if you don't); allow for added punctuation, like a full stop at the end of an answer. b) if relevant, whether you want Masculine or Feminine (e.g. a pupil = un/une élève). c) above all, give a context (with the added interest that it would be of more educational value) by giving a sentence for each word (as shown above), or by giving a theme for the list! (e.g. if the theme is 'Parts of the car' and you ask the French for 'choke', you would expect 'starter' or 'le starter' and not 'étouffer' or 's'étrangler'.)

Questionmaster, (Wida Software) solves this problem by giving a pattern showing the shape of the answer expected (i.e. showing whether an article is expected or not, and the number of letters), e.g. for an answer 'la baignoire', the following pattern would be given: ** *********).

French mistress, (Cosmos) solves the technical problems by not allowing a 'wrong' letter to appear on the screen. Apostrophes and accents automatically appear where needed and the program even includes auto-spacing. This does not leave much scope for the student's initiative, but for a vocabulary test it can be argued that: a) there is no point in spending too much time explaining why 'pain' (bread) is spelt with ai and not just i, and b) in this way, the learner never sees a mistake on the screen.However, it is still infuriating for the student when no reasonable alternative is allowed, and nothing appears on the screen as he (quite correctly) tries to type 'baignoire' for 'bath' as a piece of equipment, when the program insists on 'bain'!! (French Mistress)

On the other hand in testing grammar this would not be so beneficial, for the student should be made to think about his mistake and try again, with the help of feedback from the computer, until the correct answer is arrived at.

The most popular grammar test at the moment is, indeed, verb conjugation, probably because this is the easiest thing to fit into a program.

In French Irregular Verbs, (Carsondale) you can either test yourself (the computer gives you a verb, a tense, a person and you give the correct form of the verb) or test the computer (you ask the same question to the computer, which makes it into a super dictionary/grammar book). The problem with Carsondale however is that one translation is given for each verb (sometimes disputable and not really reversible: ex: déchoir = to fall) and the range of mistakes belongs to the 'unforgivable' category: ex: ? souvenir; réussir = to succede, etc... But if the test (vocabulary, conjugation) is to be more than just an easy-access dictionary, a proper context must be given. One should avoid for instance: Give the French for 'are we filling?' (Répondez-Comprenez) but prefer either a straight conjugation: je remplis, tu remplis

etc. (Carsondale) or give a context: 'je remplis d'abord les verres de tous ceux qui veulent du vin blanc..'

Logifrench was written using an authoring program (Questionmaster, Wida Software) for the Apple II and the BBC Model B. It is suitable for O Level, A Level and 1st year Higher Education students.

The first package deals with the conjugations of the perfect and imperfect tenses according to verb categories. Altogether about 80 verbs are covered. There are also revision tests with all the verbs mixed, a special test on être and avoir, the reflexive verbs, and verbs conjugated with the auxiliary être showing when these can also be conjugated with avoir. There is an accompanying booklet explaining how the tenses are formed and when they should be used (a sort of potted grammar on the subject). The latter constitutes the most difficult part of the exercise and many students, even at graduation, still hesitate between perfect and imperfect in certain cases.

To help with this problem, Logifrench concludes with three short stories, involving a good mixture of perfect and imperfect tenses. In the tests, all the verbs are presented in the context of a short sentence, together with its 'translation' into English. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the student gets used to the idea that 'would eat', 'used to walk' etc. call for the imperfect in French, whilst 'have been', 'walked' call for the perfect. Secondly, the student is confirmed in the idea that there is seldom word to word correspondence between English and French: although some examples are straightforward: 'Je conduisais très vite quand j'étais jeune', 'I used to drive very fast when I was young', some are less expected, whilst just as widely used in French: 'How about (drinking) some wine with the meal?', 'Et si on buvait du vin avec le repas?'

The program includes Help Notes, which can be called upon at any time during the program. They tell the student at a glance what happens to the stems and endings in the case of the imperfect, and what happens to the auxiliaries and past participles in the case of the perfect. The Help Notes would appear as: je riais, tu disais, il écrivait, elle suivait, nous rendions, vous lisiez, ils perdaient, elles vivaient.

The program includes all the features of Questionmaster, i.e. patterns to match are given when relevant (and letters that are wrong, missing or in excess are pinpointed), a score is given at the end of each test and there is a review sequence.

What do we need now?

Since the title of this conference is 'Oral and Aural skills in the modern languages degree', we should perhaps think of ways in which these skills can be acquired with the help of the microcomputer. What we could look for is a system whereby the computer could control an audio recorder which would ask the questions orally first, to be answered by the student orally (as in a Language Laboratory) or by 'writing', using the keyboard. Only if the

student did not understand the question at all should it then appear on the screen.

We could also imagine a program that would analyse an answer given orally by the student. But this kind of speech analysis is in its infancy....

Workshop Paper II

COMPUTER-BASED SELF-STUDY AND SELF-TESTING MATERIALS

Brian Farringdon, University of Aberdeen

LITTRE: An expert system for learning translation.

LITTRE, which consists of a set of programs and a specially structured database, was developed by the Scottish Computer-Based French Learning Project, a project funded by the Scottish Education Department. The system, which runs on an Apple II micro with 48k and one disc-drive, is designed for computer-assisted learning of translation at undergraduate level. The source texts used for translation consist of normal natural written language, mostly narrative and descriptive, but containing idiomatic expressions, dialogue etc. Technical language can of course also be used.

Littre contains no prepared list of questions and anticipated answers, correct or incorrect. Instead there is a complex 'tree structure' consisting of, in theory at any rate, every possible target French sentence that will translate the given source sentence. The system does not ask the learner questions, but merely prompts for the next word or words. The learner can respond by typing one word at a time, or several words, or even the whole sentence. The system will check this, word by word, searching the 'tree'. Each word that is accepted is added to the target sentence which is gradually built up on the screen. There is a routine by which obviously predictable mistakes can be trapped and commented upon refusal; another routine distinguishes automatically between lexical and syntactic errors and comments accordingly. There is no scoring routine; the program 'teaches' by favouring and investigative, exploratory attitude on the part of the learner, who is actively encouraged to try out different variants and to interrogate the system to see what possible ways forward there may be.

The program works by searching the 'tree' which consists of an analysis of the possible French target sentences on four linguistic levels (word, group, phrase and sentence). This analysis, while entirely empirical, is similar in principles and technique to that of a scale and category, or systemic, grammar. Its construction, a job which is best carried out in collaboration with a native speaker, is helped by the use of a specially designed composing program. Work is proceeding at the moment on the elaboration of a full authoring package which will enable any teacher to prepare materials for the system.

Littre is currently in use at Aberdeen for first year undergraduates studying French. It is being adapted for use on micros of other types and smaller capacity.

Workshop 5

SATELLITE TV : RUSSIAN AND FRENCH TV PROGRAMMES

Chairperson: Mr Anthony Dyson, University of Oxford, Language Centre

Rapporteur: Mr P Corness, Lanchester

The report comprises a summary of practical problems, some comments on the uses of satellite TV in teaching programmes, and some recommendations.

It is clear that direct long-distance reception of programmes by satellite is soon likely to be commonplace. Programmes from as far afield as Saudi Arabia and the USSR may already be viewed, and the picture and sound quality of these are potentially better than domestic BBC/IBA broadcasts. The equipment consists of an antenna placed at the centre of a dish-shaped reflector together with a mechanism for positioning the antenna with a high degree of accuracy. This antenna must be aimed directly at the satellite in stationary orbit and should normally be installed on the roof of a tall building well clear of any obstruction. The TV receiver itself must be capable of decoding different types of transmission. Commercial companies such as Megasat, Saturn, Multitone and Luxor offer satellite TV receiving equipment, and demonstrations have been mounted at numerous universities and polytechnics. Prices for a very basic installation start at around £2,000, but the situation is in a state of flux and significant developments are said to be on the way soon, including the so-called flat-plate antenna to replace the dish antenna and the introduction of new technical standards for international satellite broadcasting.

Consequently, equipment purchased now may become obsolete before very long. However, the members of the workshop felt that a start should be made as soon as possible in exploiting satellite TV for language-learning purposes rather than adopting an over-cautious 'wait and see' position. It was also felt that a concerted, coordinated effort should be made nationally on a non-commercial basis, perhaps under the auspices of the DES, to identify the current state of affairs and to advise institutions about the availability of equipment and further developments. (The BBC research department could perhaps also assist).

A further major problem is the question of copyright. It was felt that cooperation between Institutions of Higher Education could be made much easier if a solution could be found to this problem (e.g. by the imposition of a general tax which would benefit education and allow free cooperation to develop the considerable potential of satellite TV for language learning. As it will soon be possible to receive output from European TV stations, selective edited recordings may be used. Appropriate sections* of programmes can be used for a large variety of language-learning exercises, such as listening, monitoring, providing commentaries, writing subtitles, providing reports, role-playing and analysis of spoken language.

The potential value of satellite TV for language-learning is very great, and therefore the workshop recommended an urgent independent investigation of available equipment and of immediate developments in European satellite broadcasting technology and policy so as to bring about early resolution of these questions.

*N.B. Useful material will only be a tiny proportion of the total output available.

Workshop 6

ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE - THE BALANCE

Chairperson: Dr D Midgley, University of Cambridge

Rapporteur: Mr R W W Pollock (Bradford)

The workshop looked at the question of the balance to be looked for in oral and written work, and how this could be achieved.

The chairman began by mentioning attempts at Cambridge to 'update' language courses (e.g. oral skills now account for half of the mark awarded to first year students in the end of year examinations). Dr Midgley suggested that initially the group might reflect on the morning's plenary session, which had discussed the question of imbalance between oral and written work in language teaching as well as its implications for the organisation of time by students. Should oral work complement or compete with written work? Is competence in oral examinations dependent solely on features peculiar to oral skills?

The participants then described their own teaching context. Collectively the group represented a wide range of teaching experience in terms of both languages covered and skills taught.

Discussion dealt with the possible problems resulting from attempts to 'marry' oral and written work, and there was some doubt as to whether a consensus view existed among those teachers involved. However, it was generally felt that any possible dichotomy between oral and written skills should be minimised, and that language-teaching involves both academic and 'skill-acquiring' components. Most participants felt that oral work should play a greater part than it does at the present time.

Oral work is, in any case, very often related to written work (e.g. as a preparation for essay work). Some participants were sceptical about whether original written work should be 'cued' orally, or allowed to emerge independently from the student's creative processes. Discussion then followed as to whether, in fact, forms of speaking and writing are closely interrelated. It was agreed that oral work can enrich written work, both in the 'production' and 'reinforcement' of vocabulary and structures, although spoken language tends to be far more discursive than written.

Discussion then centred on ways in which students can be encouraged to read peripheral material such as newspapers. It was acknowledged, however, that the average student usually regards written work as more important than oral, so that it is sometimes difficult to foster a 'serious' attitude towards the oral side of the work. In connection with this point, the problem of devising effective oral tests even at the G.C.E. level, was mentioned, and an optimum length for these exams was discussed, together with what they should contain (e.g. should interpreting and/or summarising exercises be a component?).

The group then discussed the problem of the number of teacher-hours and the workable size of teaching groups in connection with oral work, where, because of group size, some students may be inhibited and others dominate. However, in language laboratory conditions, it has been found possible to devise exercises which can actually involve as many as 30 participants.

Where fluency in written work is concerned, the main problem was stated as being that students often do not have the means to express what they wish to generate.

The role of the lecteur/lectrice was then discussed, and it was agreed that the work performed by these assistants is more effective when they are fully integrated into the language-teaching system of the institution, without, however, being unduly restricted.

Returning to the question of balance between oral and written work, it was pointed out by Mr Pollock (Bradford) that oral work (particularly interpreting) can often become the content of prose and/or essay work. Not all participants were equally enthusiastic about the validity of prose work in the ML teaching syllabus, chiefly on the grounds that very often its level of success or relevance cannot be proven. However, its popularity among language teachers generally was acknowledged.

Discussion then reverted to the oral component of ML courses, and it was suggested that 'outsiders' were often sceptical about the 'correctness' of the spoken language, whereas in fact different 'degrees of correctness' may exist.

Finally, the participants discussed the assessment of communicative writing skills, particularly in courses where students are encouraged to write letters and other practical documents. The workshop ended with a brief discussion about whether writing skills should be assessed as a component of a student's ability in a foreign language.

Workshops 7, 8

AB INITIO AND MINORITY LANGUAGES

Chairperson: Mr Michael Jones, University of Ulster

Rapporteur: Miss Catriona Picken, Shell U K

The workshop began with an impassioned plea by Miss Jane Straker (Salford) that the term 'minority language' be abandoned in favour of the term 'majority' or 'interesting' language. Mr Ian Wallace (Dundee) then gave a brief paper outlining the course of ab initio German which he has been teaching over the last two years. The speaker outlined details of the number of hours involved (5 contact hours per week in Year 1) and stressed the vital role of the Lektorin in teaching the course, since she had full responsibility for teaching and assessing 50% of the course. Mr Wallace expressed the firm opinion that the course had proved very worthwhile and was in fact producing students of sufficient calibre to join the honours degree stream in German upon their return from the mandatory third year abroad.

This paper was followed by the chairman's own paper on the topic. After a brief glance at the parlous situation of the second foreign language first of all in Ulster schools, then in schools in the rest of the U K, Mr Jones outlined what he saw as the main problems connected with the field of ab initio teaching of languages at third level. These problems he saw as including such questions as: the criteria to be applied when selecting suitable students, the choice of suitable course materials, how the lecturer best copes with the transition stage of encouraging students to produce the new language actively, and the transition from a fixed course book to more wide-ranging materials. The balance between contact hours and private study work was also perceived as a problem, as was the point at which the ab initio students should join the mainstream class. The speaker concluded by making brief reference to his own experience in tackling these problem areas and expressed confidence in the expansion of ab initio courses in the future.

There then followed a brief discussion of points arising from the papers, and views concerning the teaching of languages other than German were expressed. Miss Straker recommended the Gulbenkian Trust as a charitable body sympathetic towards Portuguese.

The session concluded with some discussion of the need for support for other minority languages like Dutch, Greek or Danish, and of the career prospects open to students who chose to study these less usual languages. The latter discussion also included some views on which languages could be studied perhaps more profitably in a postgraduate course, and strong opinions were expressed about which type of graduate was most suited to which particular course.

Workshop Paper I

AB INITIO COURSES IN 'SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGES'. THE DUNDEE EXPERIENCE. Ian Wallace, University of Dundee

Ab Initio courses in foreign languages have long been taught in a variety of contexts at the tertiary level. The most obvious examples involve languages not usually found in the school curriculum (Russian, Chinese, etc). In these cases it has always been widely accepted that it is possible to start from

scratch and to achieve degree-level standard at the end of the normal period of undergraduate studies. But the idea that a so-called school subject such as German should be taught in exactly the same way can expect to be met with some resistance, especially on the grounds that it is simply not possible for beginners to reach a standard comparable to that achieved by students starting off with A Level/H Grade qualifications. On the basis of my experience of teaching an ab initio course in German at the University of Dundee (and a similar course at the University of Maine in the USA) I would challenge this view. I would argue further that such an ab initio course represents at least one possible, realistic response at the tertiary level to the present crisis in the teaching of 'second foreign languages' (i.e. all languages but French) in this country. As David Phillips and Veronica Stencel have convincingly shown, such languages are now an endangered species in the school curriculum. [1] While Phillips and Stencel make recommendations which would 'ensure at least the survival of languages other than French' (p 104) in the curriculum, the evidence they present hardly encourages the view that these are likely to be acted on in the near future or indeed ever:

> Over the years there have been numerous recommendations and indeed exhortations for a more equitable balance in language provision. And yet repeated efforts to readjust this balance to promote languages such as German and Spanish to a position of parity with French have met with considerable resistance ..... where these (i.e. foreign languages other than French) have been recommended in the past as first foreign languages, the recommendation has invariably been ignored ... Provision of second foreign languages and alternative first foreign languages is ... at best unsystematic and at worst haphazard. There are few signs of proper local policy, let alone regional or national consensus, except in so far as the complacent acceptance of the status quo can be regarded as policy. (pp 7, 10 and 71)

The authors even consider the possibility of the school curriculum contracting 'to the extent of minority languages no longer being studied in our schools.' (p 104) In the light of this analyis it would be complacent indeed of teachers of German at the tertiary level to assume that schools will continue to provide them with their 'ready-made' students in the future.

My Department offered its ab initio course in German for the first time in 1979, and we did so for two main reasons. Firstly all the signs were that recruitment to our existing post-A Level/H Grade course, while growing, was not likely to increase as quickly as we would have wished, principally because able students with school-leaving qualifications in German (a) were even then tending to opt for vocationally orientated courses which seemed to offer a secure prospect of well-paid employment, and (b) were discouraged anyway from continuing with German by the uninspiring diet of grammar and literature on which they felt they had been force-fed at school. [2] Secondly, like many tertiary institutions we discovered that much of our language work with the A Level/H Grade intake in their first year was of a remedial nature, particularly with regard to oral and aural skills, although grammatical and lexical deficiencies were also marked in many cases. This encouraged the

belief that an intelligent and industrious beginner could be expected to catch up within the five years of the Scottish MA degree course. A further factor must be mentioned which is of significance in the specifically Scottish context, viz. the current and impending implementation of the Munn/Dunning proposals in secondary schools, an important effect of which will be that Modern Languages will become an 'elective' as opposed to 'core' subject in the curriculum. It seems certain that this will further exacerbate the problem of recruitment in years to come. In this context (which - mutatis mutandis - applies to us all in some measure) an ab initio course can be seen as a form of enlightened self-help which should recommend itself to all foreign language teachers in the tertiary sector (especially to those in the so-called minority languages) at a time when their discipline is under threat. In the specific case of Dundee, our ab initio course in German was essentially a positive response to an unsatisfactory pattern of recruitment from schools -a pattern which may now become progressively even more unsatisfactory.

How can such a response be made to maximum effect? In Dundee we saw the answer as lying primarily in our ability to devise a course which, on the one hand, offers the able student the prospect of a degree in German after five years (the traditional four years of the Scottish MA plus a year abroad) and, on the other hand, allows him the freedom to opt out at the end of the first or second year. The flexibility embodied in the latter provision encourages the student to 'experiment' with German on a short-term 'look and see' basis. Where the experiment flops disastrously, he can drop the course within the first five weeks without incurring any academic penalty. In this way the risk to any student who chooses to try a 'difficult' language like German is seen as minimal. Two further aspects should be mentioned: by the term 'beginner' in German we mean anyone up to O Level/Grade standard, and our aim is that the ab initio stream should begin to emerge with the A Level/H Grade stream in the second year, a process which should be completed by the end of that year. [3]

As to the course itself, we decided on five contact hours per week during the first two years. More did not seem reasonable or advisable, given that students take three subjects altogether, each of which is given equal weight. This amounts to 230 hours in all, 190 of which are devoted to language instruction, the remaining 40 being given over (in the second year) to introductory courses on 'Post-war Germany' and 'Modern German Literature'. In a nutshell: we have 190 hours in which to lead our students to the level of linguistic competence enjoyed by post-A Level/H Grade students.

Is this a realistic target? In answering 'yes', let me say right away that this is so only where students are both able and committed to the course. A number of other important contributory factors must be mentioned: (a) our classes are always small (approx. 10-15 in the first year, 6-8 in the second year), which means it really is possible to give students individual attention and thereby make effective use of the limited contact hours available; (b) students have been persuaded of the vital need to use every available opportunity to spend time in a German-speaking country (usually during the summer vacation); (c) Two contact hours per week for two years (=92 hours in

all) are spent with a German Lektor. This is an important advantage which was usually not enjoyed by the A Level/H Grade stream while they were grappling with the basics of the language at school; (d) the same comment applies in principle to the sophistiticated Language Laboratory facilities available in the Department. Mention should also be made here of CAL techniques which are presently developing and shall begin applying in 1984/85; (e) The 190 hours of language instruction are followed by a year abroad in a German-speaking country. In effect, the student has a further year in which to do any catching up which still remains to be done before he enters his German Honours course proper (years 4 and 5) on the same basis as any post-A Level/H Grade student.

As regards the content of the course, we decided on the following basic emphases: (a) all language classes are conducted as far as possible in German; (b) fundamentals of German grammar are mastered by the end of the first year (approx. 60 hours of instruction; current texts = Schulz-Griesbach, Deutsche Sprachlehre für Ausländer 1 (first year), subsequently supplemented by materials produced within the Department (second year)); (c) structured conversation classes, conducted by a native speaker, form a centrally important part of the course from the outset; (d) by the end of the first year students are writing short essays on a wide range of everyday topics (travel, student life, shopping, etc.). The 'ideal' student should therefore be reasonably fluent in everyday spoken and written German by the end of the first year. In the second year, he should be able to deal with more demanding topics (student life in the Federal Republic; the media; intra-German relations; the Wirtschaftswunder; women's emancipation; etc.) and with a variety of language registers. By the beginning of his year abroad, he should have the linguistic competence and the knowledge of contemporary Germany necessary to make possible a rapid integration into his new environment.

It should be stressed that teaching is shared equally between a British member of staff and a German Lektor. We have found it vitally important to impress on the students that the two teachers enjoy equal status, i.e. the Lektor's lessons are not simply tacked on as an optional extra (if the grapevine is to be believed, this is still all too often the case in some institutions!). Experience has shown that this is best done by applying the age-old formula: 'It's examinable!' For this reason, the Lektor is responsibile for 50% of the marks in the Dundee course; and, in the final examination, the oral examinations with which he is most obviously associated accounts for 20% of the total mark in the first year and 15% in the second year. It is perhaps unusual to give a Lektor so much responsibility in this way (after all - it might be argued - he is a temporary member of staff who spends only two, or at most three, years teaching the course), and it is therefore necessary to stress that this does not represent an abdication of responsibility on the part of the permanent British staff. On the contrary, it is simply a recognition that, if such a course is to achieve its aims, it must ensure that the importance of the native speaker is properly recognised. As course-coordinator with responsibility for the long-term running of the course, the British member of staff in any case continues to hold the organisational reins and therefore to act as primus inter pares.

In conclusion, it must be asked whether such a course can succeed in attracting really able students who might otherwise have chosen to take other subjects. It is probably too early yet to give a definitive answer, but results to date have been encouraging. At present, 5 out of our 13 students in Junior Honours are products of the ab initio course, and two of them are taking Single Honours German (unusual in itself nowadays, when Joint Honours seems preferable to students anxious to improve their job prospects). It is highly likely that all 5 will perform creditably in their final degree examinations in 1985 and that they will be followed by others who have embarked or will embark on the same route. [4]

NOTES

1. PHILLIPS, David and STENCEL, Veronica: The Second Foreign Language, Hodder and Stoughton: London-Sydney-Auckland-Toronto, 1983.

2. Cf Professor Taylor's paper in this volume, where the same tendency for high achievers to move away from foreign languages is also noted.

3. Cf the Stirling scheme where this process has to be completed by the end of the first year: R Kilborn, P Meech and M Mitchell, 'An Intensive German Course at Stirling,' Modern Languages in Scotland, 19 Feb. 1980, 122-127, p 122.

4. Cf the conclusion reached at Stirling University on the basis of two years' results: 'As we expected in advance, there are clearly a number of students who have not had the chance to do German before who would like to at university and who, furthermore, can do it well.' (125) At Stirling, 3 (2 Honours, 1 General Degree) of the first intake of 68 intended after two years to go on and take a degree in German.

Workshop Paper II

'AB INITIO' LANGUAGES : AN UNDER-VALUED OPPORTUNITY?
Michael Jones, University of Ulster

The ab initio study of foreign languages at tertiary level is not by any means a new phenomenon on the educational scene. The more exotic and particularly the non-European languages have always been unavailable at school level, and languages closer to home - like Spanish, Italian and Russian - have also been taken up as new subjects at the post-18 stage. Why then - one might ask - do we or should we feel a pressing need to consider the question of ab initio language study particularly at this time? The answer lies surely in the recognition of the fact that the so-called crisis in modern languages, which has been looming over us for a number of years now, has recently assumed yet darker proportions. A major contributor to this fresh bout of doom and gloom was the report published jointly by the Department

of Education and Science and the Welsh Office and entitled Foreign Languages in the school curriculum, which appeared a few months ago. So alarming were its findings concerning the lowly state of modern languages in the curricula of our schools that such august bodies as the Nuffield Foundation and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals were startled into immediate action. The former quickly announced that it would conduct a large-scale national enquiry into foreign language achievement and the latter set up a working group to look at the issues as they relate to the universities. This group reported already at the beginning of November and among the salient points made in the report were the following: (the listing and numbering are my own and not as they appear in the report)

1. the numbers studying languages other than French are declining to a catastrophically low point (in schools)

2. there is a general recognition that it is in the national interest that more and more of those who wish to study engineering or management - to take just two examples - should have the option of doing so along with a language

3. new courses have been successfully pioneered in which languages are combined at degree level with a variety of other projects; economics, area studies, law, business studies, mathematics and the different branches of science and engineering

4. a number of universities have set up language teaching centres with laboratory facilities where ancillary language courses can be offered in a flexible way which is not bound by the constraints of incorporating them in joint degrees. [1]

All in all the message is a clear one: at a time when the universities - and the polytechnics - are introducing more and more courses which require students to attain a high standard of proficiency in a foreign language, the schools are in fact producing fewer linguists, the supply being particularly inadequate in the languages other than French.

Predictably enough, perhaps, the report is rather vague in its message as to what the universities should do to alleviate the current crisis and it devotes its main thrust to urging the schools to get themselves organised in a proper way and to calling for 'effective government action' [2] (the underlining is in the original!). There can be no question, of course, of the third level institutions standing idly by in this crisis - nor am I seriously suggesting that this is what the working group is in fact advocating - on the contrary those of us working at the third level of the chalk face should now consider how we can improve our own provision of language courses from scratch level for those would-be linguists among our undergraduates who have not had the opportunity - or perhaps the inclination - to study German, Spanish, Italian or any other language for that matter before, but who now feel the urge to do so.

Before turning to the third level, however, I would like to deal at least briefly with the situation in the schools in the firm belief that there the foreign language teachers will need all the support they can get from the universities and polytechnics if they are to succeed in their battle to reverse the current downward trend in the field of modern languages. From close acquaintance with the modern language scene in Northern Ireland over many years, it is fair to say that in that part of the UK the second foreign language, and in particular German, is being forced out of the curriculum in many schools to make way for more fashionable subjects like computer or business studies etc. This situation has been exacerbated of late by an edict from the Department of Education for N. Ireland which has laid down a minimum participation level of eight pupils, below which a subject group is to be regarded as unviable and its potential takers should be encouraged to join another subject group. Since in my experience most sixth-form German groups cannot muster as many as eight participants at the present time, and since the majority of school principals are non-linguists and therefore unlikely to put up much of a defence for the beleaguered sixth-form language class, the future prospects in this area must be bleak unless official policy is reversed. A further negative consequence of the constraints on the second language is the pressure which has been put on teachers to diversify away from languages into other subjects or alternatively to accept that they are the most obvious candidates for early retirement.

This parlous state of affairs is, of course, not a phenomenon of N. Ireland alone. This fact has been amply and most clearly demonstrated for the rest of the UK by David Phillips and Veronica Stencel in their recent book The Second Foreign Language.[3] The authors are concerned to present a full documentation of the failures of the past and of the reasons underlying them, but they also make the case convincingly that the situation of the second languages could be dramatically improved without a concomitant need to expend large amounts of money if only: a) the myth could be exploded that French is either the easiest or the best language to teach all eleven-year-olds, and b) the available teachers with expertise in one or more second languages were to be freed from other duties and to be thus made available to do the task they were originally trained to do.

The evidence that Phillips and Stencel adduce is wide ranging and extends from trenchant statements by such authorities as Harry Rée and Eric Hawkins to the rather less sophisticated replies of students of a number of schools, who were asked to comment on why they would like to study a second foreign language and if so which one. Some of the memorable reasons for preferring German to other languages include such statements as:

> ... because when I am old enough I would like to go to Germany on behalf of my Church as a missionary ... maybe I could save someone in Germany.[4]

This tongue-in-cheek section is, however, backed up by a great deal of very sound argument in favour of broadening the spectrum of languages available in schools, and one cannot help feeling that it is a work which should have

been put into the Christmas stocking of every headmaster and of every language HMI.

Nevertheless, as we have seen in the case of such gallant endeavours as the 'N and F proposals' scheme, the bureaucratic shackles and the multitude of interested groups all pulling in different directions are likely to ensure that any radical change of policy at the school level will be slow to be approved and even slower in the implementation. In the meanwhile the tertiary level is faced with having to supply the language needs of undergraduates who are the products of an increasingly stunted system of language provision at secondary level. This at a time also when, as the report of the CVPC's working group points out, the universities and polytechnics are busy devising more and more types of degrees which include a substantial language requirement, and, unless everyone is to study French and further compound the current felony, the new language or languages will increasingly have to be taught ab initio at third level. As regards the current level of provision of ab initio language courses in our third level institutions, there are in fact comparatively few institutions where German - for instance - can be learnt from scratch and eventually constitute the major language or one of two joint major languages at honours degree level. It is true that German clearly outstrips the other second languages in terms of 'O' and 'A' level takers, and hitherto the third level could expect to recruit people with an 'A' Level in German much more readily than in Italian, Russian or even Spanish. Nevertheless I was surprised to discover when I did an informal survey of 22 universities and polytechnics that only three of them offer the ab initio German entrant the chance to take the language as one of two major languages in a joint honours degree. Since I had had the chance of meeting colleagues from two of the institutions in question at the recent conference of University Teachers of German, and they had said it was exceedingly unusual for anyone to do so successfully, we are clearly talking here of a rare animal indeed. It may also interest those present to know that our hosts for this conference, the University of Bradford, do not offer the ab initio German option either, though Russian and Spanish are available. Perhaps I had no real right to be surprised, however, since my own experience in teaching ab initio German to students of West European Studies over the last decade has taught me that the numbers of those who have gone on from scratch level to major in German could indeed be counted on the fingers of the proverbial one hand.

There are, of course, good reasons for this smallness of numbers, the main one being that it is - given the very limited amount of time available during the traditional four-year honours degree course - very hard indeed to reach an adequate standard of spoken and written performance in a new language. This brings us to the question of the problems associated with ab initio language courses in general, and it is perhaps useful to list the major ones at this stage in order that we may more readily get to grips with them during our discussions in this group.

i) Potential ab initio students are traditionally chosen for the course by placing reliance on their performance in another foreign language at 'A' level - usually French - and though some institutions place their faith in

so-called 'language aptitude tests' as an extra guide, the 'A' level is usually accepted for most purposes.

ii) The number of actual contact hours is discouragingly, dauntingly high, as specified in the relevant prospectuses, and a first-year student may find himself faced with as many as twenty-four contact hours overall, a pensum which leaves little time for extensive reading or private study.

iii) The balance between actual contact hours and private study in the ab initio course is a problem which is not readily resolved. To what extent is the private study to be considered an option in fact? - bearing in mind that the student will scarcely succeed without it.

iv) Practice seems to differ quite considerably as to the point at which you put the ab initio stream together with the mainstream - i.e. post 'A' level students. In some cases it is at the end of year one, in others after year two or even later; the pros and cons leave plenty of room for argument here.

v) It is beyond the resources of most language departments to produce their own beginners courses; it is usually a case of having to choose a commercially available course and to alter and supplement it according to personal taste - an ongoing problem, since staff changes do occur and courses date, too.

vi) A fairly traumatic stage in my experience for ab initio students of a language is the period when they are being weaned away from the more passive type of language exercise - filling in the gaps, changing the genders, etc. and being steered towards free expression in the language; even the best learners tend to get discouraged at this stage.

vii) A further problem of transition is a headache for the teacher rather than for the student, since it has to do with the gathering of material suitable to bridge the gap between the ab initio course book and the mainstream work the student has eventually to be in a position to cope with. Practice probably varies greatly here, and ideas could very usefully be pooled for the guidance of those likely to be involved in what must be seen as an expanding area of language teaching activity.

Having compiled what is, of course, by no means an exhaustive list of the problems associated with ab initio languages I would like to round off my remarks by making some personal comments on each problem in the hope of getting the ball rolling for our coming deliberations. Turning to point i) I must admit that this is an area where my own institution is very traditional in its reliance on 'A' level performance in another language only. According to Squadron Leader David Wood, however, writing in the April 1979 report of the CNAA Working Party on Resources for Language Learning, the use of language aptitude tests has reduced the failure rate in basic intensive language courses from 29% to 7%. He adds the proviso, however: 'Whilst not suggesting that this dramatic improvement can be laid wholly at the door of

aptitude tests, it seems that much can be gained by their use'.[5] Clearly this is an area where more work needs to be done, though if the third level is to meet the challenge of ab initio head on, we cannot afford to be too elitist in the way we select those we are prepared to teach.

The contact hours question ii) is answered squarely in another contribution to that same CNAA report by F M Daver of Liverpool Polytechnic, who requires his students to 'undergo a massive exposure to the language of 645 hours (in year 1), comprising 315 hours of tuition (of which 66 are in the language laboratory) and 330 hours of directed private study'.[6] If, like myself, you find this an awesome task to contemplate, I should perhaps add Mr. Daver's final reassuring paragraph in his report:

> 'The great majority of students on our ab initio course have been shown to be highly motivated and committed, since, besides taking other first year subjects, they are required to complete an undoubtedly taxing and demanding programme. It is, however, a most rewarding experience, and we have reason to be happy with the outcome: the percentage of former ab initio students who, at the end of their third year, successfully take the Honours option compares favourably with the percentage of former post 'A' level students who do so; no other areas of study appear to suffer from the students' concentrating on Spanish; and the wastage at the end of the first year is minimal.'[7]

From F M Daver's figures it is clear that his answer to the private study question (problem iii)) is an unequivocal one: students must do ten hours per week of private study in addition to their classwork. Unfortunately there is no indication of how closely the work done out of class is monitored. Clearly the more carefully the work is monitored or even actually marked and corrected the more time-consuming an exercise it will be. One solution here which is worth considering is the University of Bradford's 'Linguistic Profile'[8] report system, which one could perhaps learn more about on these premises.

As to the point in time when you put ab initio and mainstream together Liverpool Polytechnic plumps for the beginning of year 2 (problem iv) and presumably it works, though one would presume also that the ab initio people must still have a lot more to do in their second year than the mainstream people - otherwise a question mark would surely be raised over the efficacy of the first year mainstream course.

The question of 'which course?' (point v) is a thorny one, since tastes differ. As regards German - and my own experience - we are fortunate in that there are any number available, but this plethora does not ease the task of actually choosing one of the many. The opposing forces in play here are the need to have a basically sound and informative course as against the students' natural desire to follow a lively and stimulating one. For many years we employed Deutsch 2000 [9] amended and augmented by our material to supplement what we saw as its deficiencies, but the time came inevitably when the staff regularly employed in teaching the course knew it by heart, and had successfully wrung every drop of freshness out of the course, so we changed

to Sprachkurs Deutsch.[10] Students find it much more lively, but as we are only in our second year, it is hard to gauge its success as yet.

Problem vi) is one to which there is no one answer, nor a universally accepted canon of answers. Aural comprehension is at least a good preparation for self-expression, though the ingenuity and personality of the teacher will probably always remain the only keys to bringing out the shy member of an oral practice class. For written expression practice guided stories, essay skeletons and précis are probably as good a method as any.

As far as vii) is concerned, and the question of course material at the translation stage, my own solution has been to scour bookshops in Germany for booklets prepared for teaching history and social studies to classes in the 12-14 age range, since the language employed in this material is simplified and thus can be understood fairly readily by students operating with a very limited range of vocabulary and structures. The actual content also mates in well with a European Studies course. One presumes that Spanish or Italian schoolbooks would serve the same purpose also.

The greatest hurdle of all is surely that of motivation. Since we are asking ab initio students to work much harder - initially at least - than their post 'A' level peers, we must also presumably convince them that what they are striving for is a worthwhile goal - in a time of severe unemployment in itself a very difficult task.

NOTES

1. op.cit., p 1 2. ibid., p 4 3.Hodder and Stoughton, 1983 4. op.cit., p 32 5. op. cit., p 49 6. ibid., p 47 7. ibid., pp 47-48 8. cf.ibid., pp 21-23 9. Hueber, Munich, 1972 10. Diesterweg et al., Frankfurt am Main, 1982.

Workshop 9

EXPLOITING VIDEO RESOURCES: OFF-AIR, CLASSROOM AND STUDIO TV

Chairperson: Mr James Coleman (Glasgow)

Rapporteur: Mr Peter Dyson, University of Oxford, Language Centre

After the presentation of a paper by the chairman, these topics were examined: 1) The general advantages offered by the use of video. 2) The relative advantages of purpose-made language teaching materials and off-air material. 3) The ways in which video is used.

The general advantages were thought to be motivation, novelty and variety of content, and also the fact that students are used to this medium and associate it with a positive attitude. In addition, the visual element of the material adds a new dimension to audio material and also helps to

conceptualise language. Another advantage is comprehensibility. There was some argument as to whether the visual element increases comprehension. Research in this area is not entirely conclusive. Further investigation is needed. Another general advantage is the flexibility in the ways in which the material can be exploited. Finally, the nature of video output is controllable.

The advantages of off-air material were high quality, cheapness and topicality. The disadvantages were that such material was not always ideal for language teaching and the random presentation of materials was also a drawback. Also disadvantageous was the fact that such material was aimed at native speakers and therefore often presented difficulties of language level. The final disadvantage of off-air materials was its ephemeral nature.

However, the advantages of purpose-made material are firstly that the language is predictable and therefore easy to handle for pedagogical purposes. Also, there should be no copyright problems, although mention was made of the caveats which should be borne in mind when disseminating material outside one's own institution. The disadvantages of purpose-made materials were firstly the tremendous resources of equipment and staff needed. It was also pointed out that such material has to be exploited up to the hilt and teachers may consequently become bored with it the second or third time round. A solution offered to this problem was to build in recycling of new material each year. Another disadvantage is that purpose-made material can be less 'authentic' than off-air material.

Workshop Paper

VIDEO INPUT: SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.
James Coleman, University of Glasgow

The main purpose of this paper is to prepare for discussion on the role of video in language teaching. It is impossible, in the time available, to survey the whole field, so I intend to concern myself firstly with the general advantages, present and future, of the use of video in teaching, and then to argue that a corpus of material recorded in France - such as that produced last summer by the Lyon à la Une project of the Scottish Universities' French Language Research Association - is to be preferred to the use of off-air recording of broadcast material. I will be able to touch only briefly on the exploitation of video input, and will have to omit entirely two other important aspects: studio production, and the use of video as output.

Why should we use video at all for language input? The importance of the spoken language is being increasingly recognised, and for the presentation of spoken texts, video has a number of advantages. They can be summarised as motivation, authenticity, contextualisation, comprehensibility, flexibility and future potential.

Motivation

Although the novelty value of the use of video in language classes will wear

off after a few years, it will still offer variety, not only in its difference from other types of language class, but also in its almost infinite spread of potential speakers and topics, and of follow-up exercises. Moreover, whether we like it or not, students are used to receiving information through the television screen, and respond less well to a stimulus that is merely aural. Students feel more comfortable with a video image on a television screen, even if they are so busy taking notes that they do not actually watch. Video can do away with both the isolation and the sensory - especially visual - deprivation that give so many students a phobia about language lab work.

Authenticity

There is as much debate about the precise definition of authenticity as there is about the degree of authenticity that is really needed in texts used in language teaching. It can be said that a sound tape is only authentic in so far as there is no visual element in the actual communication recorded. In this sense, audio tapes are authentic only when recording telephone conversations or radio broadcasts, and so have a limited pedagogical value. Videotapes add the paralinguistic information which will always be vital, and which may convey anything up to 100% of the message. If you observe student response, it is clear also that video offers them a heightened sense of reality as compared with audio.

Contextualisation

An important element of authentic communication is conveyed through context: if carefully managed, video can present to the student several aspects of context: not merely the physical setting for the interaction, but also the identity of the speakers. Preparatory (self-study) video work can offer in addition portraits of the individuals involved, and a picture of the issues under discussion. On a broader level, video can present the whole cultural context - the French way of life - more fully than any other medium.

The context can also be vital to the clarity of the message. In one of our recordings, for example, the sound-track in a violin-maker's workshop is punctuated by a repeated, strident 'Bonjour' - not so much phatic as emphatic. On the audio tape this makes no sense at all; on the videotape you can see the mynah bird!

An instance of the pedagogical application of this kind of clarity comes when a group of speakers are discussing the relative merits of Lyon and Paris. One of them refers to the Centre Pompidou, a building most of our students would be unfamiliar with. Using video, it's easy to put a slide of the Centre Pompidou on the television screen while the discussion continues.

Comprehensibility

Last term, I carried out an informal comparative comprehension test, using a videotape with one group of students, and a sound-only version with another group. There is no doubt that in this instance student comprehension was

strikingly enhanced by the use of the video. In part, the improved performance must be ascribed to the contextual information and paralinguistic signs; but it must be largely due, I think, to the possibility of watching the speaker's lips move. Research in this area would be most valuable.

Flexibility

Video offers, at the editing stage, the possibilities of interpolation of still shots and of voice-overs. Another facility with clear pedagogical applications is the simultaneous presentation of sound, picture, and superimposed written text. This text could take the form of transcription, translation, content markers to aid comprehension, difficult vocabulary, or markers of beginnings and ends of exercises.

Above all, video provides authentic language with all its features, but which is at the same time fully controllable: you can reply as often as you wish to ensure comprehension, or freeze-frame to analyse a gesture - facilities not available even with the most willing lectrice.

Future potential

The videodisc is already with us, and already offers significant advances over videotape: since it is read by laser and not by mechanical means, it can be reused far more frequently without deterioration of quality; and it permits very rapid access to any part of a recording. This latter quality will be very important as computer software is developed: immediate random access to authentic language stored on videodisc will make programmed individual learning much more widely available, more interesting, and more effective. These programmes are already being developed using videotape, but even with fast wind and rewind the process is slow and cumbersome.

A disadvantage of present videodiscs is that they are read-only: in other words, you either accept what the manufacturers think is good for you, or you pay some £3000 for each disc containing your own material. This hurdle is already being overcome with the advent of read-write discs, but so far they are on sale only in the US and have a number of drawbacks, among which are cost, compatibility only with one camera (no copying from videotape), the single NTSC format, and the limited length (8 minutes or 15000 frames as compared with a probably 560,000 frames for other videodiscs). It is not clear whether presently available discs are re-recordable or not, but that is an obvious future development.

There is already a choice of means to present video material: large screens for classroom use, small screens for lab or self-access work.We can expect that the take-away homework video disc will in due course become as common as the take-away audio cassette is now. It is, alas, unlikely that the future will bring about a universal format for tapes and discs, or a universal television standard, desirable though these would be for exchanging materials.

The advent of cable TV seems unlikely to affect language teaching, but Direct Broadcasting by Satellite will increase considerably the quantity of broadcast material available to us. I would like now to explain briefly why I do not find the prospect particularly exciting for structured teaching (while welcoming it for the bain de langue DBS will offer to advanced students).

VIDEO INPUT: OFF-AIR OR FIELD RECORDINGS?

Video from any source can be said to offer contemporary, authentic language, a visual presentation of French life, a range of dialects and sociolects, and plenty of material for exercises. Why did we in the Lyon à la Une team decide to go to the considerable trouble and expense of going to France and making our own videotapes?

There are five main factors: a difference of purpose, a difference of target audience, predictability, quality, and copyright.

Difference of purpose

There is considerable variation in the purpose of professional programme makers. Their aim may be aesthetic or didactic, to entertain or to persuade, and the director's decisions - especially editing decisions - will be taken in the light of his particular aim. The result is to make a lot of available material useless for language teaching: interviews are broken up or overlaid with unconnected visuals; speakers are not identified; and the emphasis will normally be on the pictures rather than the soundtrack. Virtuoso direction can be distracting, too; while simple talking heads can become boring, a too-rapid succession of images on the screen is disconcerting. Too much scripted and/or autocued material is a poor preparation for real life interactions. And broadcast language tends to cover a very narrow range of registers and of behavioural functions.

Difference of target audience

Authentic broadcast materials are directed at an audience of native speakers. They therefore often contain hidden obstacles which do not bother the target audience, but which hinder student comprehension: background music, incidental noises, confused group scenes, fast or indistinct speech. It may also be of little concern to a French producer whether a speaker is using the language naturally or in a forced way because of camera nerves: the language teacher should not be indifferent to such distinctions.

Predictability

Predictability is an old friend in a new guise. One of the many drawbacks of the old prose-translation method is the randomness with which lexical and grammatical items occur. It may be that at an advanced level, when all grammar has been mastered and perfectionnement is merely a question of refining the student's sensibility, randomness (like background noise) ceases to be a disadvantage - unpredictability is, after all, one of the factors used to

define whether language is authentic or not. But at a lower level of ability, when structured learning is desirable, a lot of time and effort are needed, in any course based on authentic texts, to resolve randomly occurring points of interest into a coherent structure. (We experienced this difficulty in preparing Le Français en Faculté, and also found how hard it is, even with an almost infinite stock of written texts, to find a passage illustrating a particular grammatical or lexical field.)

The problem is still more acute when the input is up-to-the-minute. Nothing is more ephemeral than news broadcasts. When, in Glasgow, we were receiving tapes of French television every fortnight or so, we had no sooner developed extracts into useful teaching material than the Iranian hostages were released or Giscard had to leave the Elysée. The quick turnover dictated by the use of ephemera simply accentuates the problem of randomness.

With a corpus produced by teachers themselves in France, the problem can be reduced, if not totally resolved. There are two approaches: we might call them the night-before and the morning-after solutions.

The night-before anti-randomness pill consists of defining in advance the kind of language required, then selecting the context in which the interaction will take place, selecting the participants, and selecting the topic of conversation or tasks to be performed. In this way, the language itself, while remaining authentic, becomes to a certain degree predictable.

In the Lyon à la Une project, we defined our target language according to functions and notions, allied to broad topic areas. For example, a department meeting in Galeries Lafayette was likely to produce directive language involving temporal and spatial notions and concerned with the general area of commerce. The predictions are not always accurate, of course: a meeting of senior delegates from the communist trades union CGT produced not discussion but a series of monologues, since we had failed to predict the extent to which cégétistes speak with a single voice.

Nonetheless, randomness can be reduced by forward planning, whether on notional/functional lines, or according to any other linguistic desiderata, whether grammatical, lexical, sociological, or situational - the latter being especially appropriate for school use.

The morning-after solution seeks to cope with randomness by analysis after the event. Obviously, it is only worth doing if the material is not too ephemeral - and here pre-selecting topics and speakers did give Lyon à la Une a corpus which is in general less ephemeral than available televised material. We are still in the process of researching which computer labels will be most useful in cataloguing the corpus, but they will have to cover several different dimensions - functions, notions, topics, lexical fields, syntactical fields, morphological fields, indexical characteristics of speakers, dialectal features, potential pedagogical applications, etc. The final result should be a database ideally suited for devisers of language courses.

Ephemerality will still be a problem, as will the boredom which teachers experience from using the same texts year after year, but we hope to minimise them both by offering a wide choice of texts, and by repeated material-gathering visits to Lyon, each followed by an updating of the database.

Quality

Original recordings must be of the highest possible quality. Students and tutors will normally be working with third or fourth generation copies, and each time a tape is copied, its quality deteriorates. Even taking into account that a certain amount of tape will have to be discarded for its technical shortcomings (the wrong camera filter or colour balance, low sound levels, wind noise) the quality of the rest of the video we made in Lyon is higher than we can get from off-air recordings. And the success we had in making audio recordings in digital stereo makes us look forward keenly to the advent of digitally-recorded video.

Copyright

Copyright problems are familar to all those who have produced courses containing authentic texts and they seem, if anything, to be getting worse. Some organisations demand extortionate royalties, many others simply do not reply to letters. For a course which has cyclical replacement of material built in, this is a recurrent headache, but one that can be considerably reduced by recording one's own material.

Studio recordings, videotaping student performance

I would add here - although time prevents me from exploring the subject more fully - that I have found studio-produced videotapes very useful, despite their being open to the charge of lack of authenticity, and their tendency to be inflexible in that they are designed for one specific exercise. Even so, they are probably a more productive use of the time of that endangered species, the foreign language assistant, than the aimless 'conversation classes' some Universities still indulge in, as an easier option to actually <u>teaching</u> the spoken language.

One of the difficulties of teaching the spoken language is that the learner has no concrete evidence of what he or she has learnt. A solution is to use video as output, to tape student interactions for later analysis or assessment. It is an area fraught with problems, especially of demotivation.

Exploitation

The third area I cannot on this occasion cover adequately is what exactly can be done with a video input. I would like nonetheless to offer a brief summary of possibilities, with the proviso that the teacher's job, as always, is not to plod through every available exercise, but to select those - or help the student select those - which will be most useful.

Before the class, and in the initial stages of classroom exploitation, the intention must be to focus the student's attention on the language used, rather than on other features of the tape, although preparatory work must also provide the cultural and situational context in which the very short classroom extract will be viewed. Comprehension can be guided by a series of questions or notes, a résumé, or a texte lacunaire, and can move from discrete lexical items to questions requiring comparison of two or more items, and then to more interpretative questions on an overall tone or attitude. Transcription - provided the convention is clearly laid down in advance - can help not only comprehension and memorisation, but also some awareness of the differences between spoken and written language. Given that a videodisc can combine filmed material with photographic documentation - over half a million pages of text on a single disc - preparatory work will one day include a lot of reading around a topic, as well as role-familiarisation (Vigner's ethnotypes, perhaps) in preparation for role-play exercises. Directing students to separate sections can ensure the role differentiation and information gap needed for realism.

The video extract used in class will probably be only three or four minutes long, to allow sufficient time for checking students' preparatory work as well as analysis and discussion of the features of the language used. Exercises will then reinforce whichever feature the teacher wishes to concentrate on; it can be aural (pronunciation, intonation, liaison), structural, lexical, attitudinal or functional and will lead, by a progression moving slowly but surely away from the original input, to a freer range of exercises and games which can be done at home or in a later class, and which can range in written or spoken mode from translation through précis and discussion to creative writing or a role-play simulation.

There is no doubt in my mind that video is the most important tool to become available to the language teacher in recent years. It is not a panacea, and it would be silly to make for video the exaggerated claims once made for the language lab and currently made for Vivaldi background music, but, if properly used, video will undoubtedly increase the interest and efficacy of language teaching.

Workshop 11

THE CONFERENCE INTERPRETING LABORATORY

Chairperson and Rapporteur:

Mr Michael Rider, Brighton Polytechnic

This workshop took the form of a practical fact-finding session with two main components:

1. A talk by Mr. M. Croft (Bath) on the use of video in consecutive interpreting. In this context the advantages of video were seen to be: a) To show a professional performance to would-be future professionals. (It is often comforting to see that even professionals make errors.) b) To provide training in note-taking. c) To provide a demonstration of interpreting experience in real time (This being more demanding than some of the shorter practice sessions) d) To offer playback possibilities which have pedagogical applications.

It was found that, at the practical level, the use of video with students helped with problems of note-taking and also in indicating to the student the shortcomings in his/her technique. The presence of the TV camera could help the student learn to produce a performance under pressure. The use of video also helped to produce an atmosphere of formality which is present in a real-life interpreting situation. Subsequently a series of brief clips of Bath PG students at work was shown. Video was shown being used in two ways: i) a student was shown producing notes as authentic speech was played through to him (this had obvious pedagogical applications for the student who would see the clip); ii) students were then shown reproducing material heard in English.

A second series of clips enabled the student to be seen in a head and shoulders position while taking notes. Thus the student was able to see his/her own performance as seen by others.

2. The second component of this session was a discussion centring round not only the use of the conference interpreting laboratory but also interpreting courses in general at undergraduate/postgraduate level. Particular interest was expressed in the principles and practice of note-taking. A tour was then made of one of the two new 12-booth conference interpreting laboratories at Bradford University. The thinking which had gone into the design of these laboratories, based on experience gained over a number of years in the needs of training interpreters, was explained by Bradford staff.

Workshop 12

THE WORD-PROCESSOR AND ADVANCED TRANSLATION WORK

Chairperson and Rapporteur: Miss Catriona Picken, Shell UK

This workshop took the form of two contributions, one from Miss C. Picken and one from Professor Tilford. Miss Picken had been asked to give an account of the usefulness of word-processors to the Translation division of Shell UK Ltd in London. She told of the choice of a word-processor system. A Phillips system had been rejected and a Logica VTS system adopted. The advantage of this particular system was that it was particularly user-friendly, both in the sense of being easy to operate and being adjustable for height and tilt.

Shell UK Ltd does translation work into English from about 10 different languages and from English into French, German and Spanish. The word-processor is found to be useful in procedures which involve the making of first draft translations typed in by the translator, who then obtains a hard copy of the draft text and uses it as a working discussion copy. The translator then goes back to the machine and makes a revised text which is then edited for both typing errors and alterations made during the revision process. The hard copy is then printed out and thus a perfect camera-ready copy is obtained. For an extra £200 a micro-chip can be acquired which provides a sorting facility, and this means that random lists can be typed. These can then be sorted into alphabetical order. However, glossaries can be created entirely manually and translators at Shell now tend to do their research beforehand so as to allow the word-processors to be used for a shorter time. Miss Picken also mentioned a spelling-check package which is available for most systems but has not been purchased by Shell. However, this package does not pick up typing errors very well if the error is a valid word.

The advantage of the Logica VTS system is to give translators complete control over the translation process from drafting to final copy. Therefore, the Division's typists can focus attention on very difficult types of word (i.e. languages with which the word-processor cannot cope, copy typing in languages like Rumanian, very difficult tables etc.). The word-processor can also be used as a reasonably competent information retrieval system for the Division's non-book materials.

Professor Tilford then described the use of the word-processor in advanced translation classes with postgraduate students. He endeavours to simulate professional conditions by giving a group of students a long, difficult text which is divided up and shared among them. The students then appoint a reviser who is the focal point for all work done. The reviser inputs a draft translation which then goes through several revision processes, using the word processor every time. Thus it is possible to simulate real work conditions. A short discussion then ensued.

Workshop 13

LANGUAGE CHANGE: KEEPING TRACK OF DEVELOPMENTS IN ORAL LANGUAGE

Chairperson: Mrs M Young, University of Stirling

Rapporteur: Mr Cyril Meadows, University of London

The workshop addressed itself to three main questions:

1 Do we recognise the importance of language change?

The group did recognise the importance of language change, but changes in slang and colloquialisms were thought to be much less significant than more fundamental structural changes and changes in ideas of what is appropriate language in particular contexts.

2 How do we incorporate this important aspect into the undergraduate programme?

There was some feeling that in the short 3 or 4-year undergraduate course teaching should concentrate on more basic aspects of language (rather than attempting to cover what might be considered to be subtle changes of usage). Nevertheless, it was generally agreed that undergraduates should be made fully aware of the rapidity of language change: one way of doing this was constantly to up-date teaching materials (e.g. by exploiting the resources of TV satellite programmes).

3 Can facilities for providing information on language change be pooled between establishments?

It was thought that any long-term research projects into language change would inevitably produce out-of-date results; a co-operative programme of systematic monitoring of language changes undertaken by a number of establishments was considered, but there were doubts about the feasibility of this. It was generally concluded that individual teachers should keep track of language changes by their own personal efforts.

Workshop 14

INTERPRETING AS A LANGUAGE-LEARNING ACTIVITY

Chairperson: Dr Gisela Shaw, Bristol Polytechnic

Rapporteur: Dr Kevin Bruton, University of Salford

This workshop, among the most popular, inevitably overran its allotted timespan and resumed for a further ninety-minute session in the evening. Given the expertise available in the area among many of the participants and the willingness of a number of colleagues to provide input based on pedagogic and professional experience it was perhaps also inevitable that the workshop tended to follow a presentation-plus-question format rather than a general discussion.

Dr G Shaw (Bristol), opening proceedings from the chair, established a few parameters (the organization of interpreting teaching, its modes, teaching methods and materials, testing) in order to furnish a framework for the workshop. There was general consensus that teaching and testing methods ought to dominate much of subsequent business.

Edda Ostarhild (Ealing) contributed a brief paper contrasting student performance in ad-hoc interpreting on two Ealing courses - a one-year postgraduate course for literary-based students, and a BEC Tourism and Travel course, equivalent to first-year undergraduate level, for students concerned predominantly with employer-oriented communicative skills. The speaker emphasised inter alia the need for reorientation tasks for students obsessed with literal word-for-word translation rather than with transmission of the message. Brief discussion of the paper brought out the merit which a number of participants felt was inherent in beginning interpreting early in the undergraduate course; and observations upon the desirability of students 'working' in their mother tongue as well as the TL.

Mr K Cleary (Senior Interpreter at the European Parliament) outlined at length the practical and professional problems of working as a simultaneous and consecutive interpreter, and described his own method of teaching interpreting, employing taped speeches from the European Parliament. He underlined above all the central importance of grasping ideas rather than words and explained that familiarity with technical terms and acronyms, with link words and synonyms, was crucial to the task. On the subject of note-taking, he was in favour of limiting symbols or signs to a minimum and of using clear line and cross-line referencing to indicate the flow and change of ideas.

Dr J Henderson (Bradford) outlined the organization of interpreting teaching at his institution, stressing that all languages students commence interpreting in second-year, and relating the varied and flexible approach in the pegagogic process. This speaker's points were developed further in a more detailed presentation by his colleague Mr B Griffiths (Bradford) of how consecutive interpreting is introduced in the second year and built up in subsequent years. Mr Griffiths outlined the gradual progression in teaching methodology from using short sentences in TL and relying upon memory alone to the eventual provision of lengthier passages involving notetaking techniques. The speaker introduced a number of ways in which student's performance could be improved, notably via memory, notation and glossary exercises and recounted a range of audio-visual techniques; the final-year examining procedure was also described.

Mr A Riddell (Salford) proposed that the language-learning process in liaison/bilateral/ad-hoc interpreting should take into account at least five distinct areas, and in each area he suggested practical means of pursuing such a methodology. The five areas elucidated were (i) vocabulary and structures (ii) ideas, not words (iii) articulateness (iv) questioning the speaker (v) correction. The practice of 'chuchotage' was also summarised.

Finally Dr M Kammayer (Oxford) distributed a two page handout entitled 'Ad-Hoc Interpreting as a Basis for Exercises in Aural Comprehension and Oral Translation', which was much appreciated by workshop participants but which there was not time to discuss.

In conclusion, it was widely agreed that the nature of the workshop topic and the high participation level were both vital factors in contributing to a general feeling that the workshop, despite important informative and stimulating contributions, had in some ways scarcely broached the topic area. As a consequence, it was suggested that a short conference/colloquium on the same subject might valuably be organised in the near future as a follow-up to the discussions on the teaching of interpreting initiated at Bradford.

A summary of the workshop paper on teaching interpreting given by Edda Ostarhild, Ealing College of Higher Education

The paper, based on experience at Ealing, presented a number of detailed observations which raised certain important questions about the teaching of interpreting.

Firstly comments were made on the effect which interpreting, as an exercise, has on post-graduate students from a wide range of undergraduate language courses who undertake a one-year secretary-linguist course. The composition of the groups has remained constant during the past nine years. It was found that it was desirable to incorporate interpreting into the course for vocational purposes. The students were reasonably competent as students, willing, highly motivated and happy to use and display their skills.

However, in the case of interpreting they clung desperately to 'translation'. Although striving to extend their aural memory, they tended to use the latter to produce as literal a translation as possible, as perfect as possible in terms of grammar and style, sometimes stopping in the middle of a sentence because they did not wish to repeat a word. They seemed, at times, more worried about matching the style than about conveying the meaning of the original. To reorientate such students in terms of the exercise of interpreting was, therefore, a major objective. However, achieving it was extremely difficult, mainly because they assumed the rôle of what, for them, was the 'excellent' student - the person who translated as perfectly as possible, even if it took time. For some of them time was never seen as an important factor. Attempts at reorientation were difficult, because they would fall out of the rôle of the interpreter into note-taking of a different kind, writing down vocabulary or enquiring about spelling, meaning etc. Some became despondent about their own performance and felt discouraged by students who did well. The latter worked swiftly, automatically, and did not follow the syntactical or lexical patterns of the original. This was often seen as 'cutting corners' by the others and to be of an 'inferior standard'.

To investigate these observations questionnaires were designed relating to both student attitude and ability to discover inter alia the attitudes of the students to what they were doing:

(a) is the activity stimulating?
(b) is it boring?
(c) if boring, is it because it is intellectually suspect?

An interesting finding was that frequently the students were worried about the 'academic respectability' of the exercise. This raised important questions:

(a) do we actually know what we expect of the students and
(b) are we aware that our expectations might be seen to be 'suspect'?

Another observation was that some students find it embarrassing to perform in public, preferring the isolation of the language laboratory booth. Perhaps more interesting was the discovery that many students found it embarrassing to ask questions, since 'good students' should expect to work on their own; the creating of a team-spirit between teacher and interpreter often took time. In contrast, first year students attending B.Tech. courses including a language showed much less introversion, and were more able to identify their problems in the linguistic areas when acting as interpreters.

The post-graduate students identified their main difficulty with the exercise as the requirement to produce German 'off the cuff', or in the precise context. The questionnaires also revealed that perhaps the main area of difficulty lay with aural performance - the listening skills provided the main hurdle to effective, successful interpreting. The question of the rôle of aural competence, and the teaching of the skills, in the undergraduate course is vital, and the pooling of knowledge and experience desirable. At Ealing a fairly compex and lengthy testing procedure is used in Finals; it would be interesting to know what happens in other institutions.

Another important question concerned the extent to which students are made aware of the precise objectives of their course in general and of interpreting in particular. In defining the possible rôles of interpreting in the language learning process it is important to know, for example, whether the aim is to see the exercise as a means of recreating the spoken word, together with the implications for translating into the foreign language, with a need to think again about the nature of translating and the need to re-define 'precision', and to look again at the processes of summarising and reporting. This would shed new light on what we could call 'recreating' a text.

Linked to this is the interest of discovering the proportions of oral/aural to written work in degree level work.

Edda Ostarhild is currently engaged in a research project on bilateral oral communication (ad hoc interpreting) and would welcome contacts with other teachers and researchers in this field.

Workshop 15

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

Chairperson: Mr Michael Taylor, University of Bath

Rapporteur: Mr Michael Townson, University of Aston

The discussion opened with a review of the number of foreign language assistants employed in the institutions and departments represented, and the effects of recent financial cuts on their numbers. The pattern is highly uneven, some departments having lost all their language assistants, and others managing to maintain their numbers. Owing to the small size of the sample, it was not possible to establish any valid correlations between language assistant attrition and the type of institution involved, although it was suggested there might be some connexion with the value placed on the language assistants and their work.

In this connexion the staff status of language assistants was discussed. Here again there is a wide variation in practice, some departments regarding language assistants as full members of academic staff or holding a proportion (typically 1/2 or 1/3) of an academic staff post, other departments classifying assistants as technical support staff, who are thus unaffected directly by moves in academic staff numbers. The temporary nature of the foreign language assistant's position, with contracts renewable annually, does mean that in the present climate these posts are constantly at risk.

Attention next turned to the way in which foreign language assistants are recruited; here again there is a variety of practice, dependent on institution and language, ranging from the delegation of language assistants by exchange universities over whom the host institution has no control, through recruitment by organizations such as DAAD and the allocation of assistants by the Central Bureau, to the response to direct enquiries or applications.

The preparation which assistants receive for their work differs greatly: at one end of the scale the new lector is dependent on there being an overlap with a lector already in post, as no member of academic staff is available to introduce the new lector to his duties (this sometimes being the case with 'exchange' lectors), and at the other end the lector will have passed through both a general induction course (e.g. of the type run by DAAD) and a specific course put on by the host department.

It is impossible to establish a uniform pattern of activity for the language assistant, the duties carried out being influenced by the language concerned, departmental policy (or lack of it) and also by the qualifications and experience of the individual assistant. Generally, however, it is expected that the assistant will be active both inside and outside the classroom, the latter activities including conversing with staff, making recordings, acting as 'walking reference works', and organizing informal language practice for students.

The former activities cover the whole gamut from 'conversation classes' whose connection with the academic programme is extremely tenuous, through providing an integrated back-up to academic courses (e.g. by giving tutorials and conducting seminars) and taking part in the 'mainstream' language teaching, to giving independent academic courses.

It was suggested that the most effective use can be made of language assistants if they are used 'in tandem' with established members of academic staff. The practice of delegating assistants to give 'conversation classes' without any guidance was severely criticized, particularly in early years. It was pointed out that 'conversation classes' will only work successfully with a) experienced teachers and b) experienced students.

If, however, assistants are to be used effectively, to be given adequate preparation and guidance and to be integrated into a department's teaching activities, this requires a level of organizational and administrative input by members of academic staff which not all departments appear willing to invest.

Given the level of cuts imposed on universities, some departments are being forced to try and run teaching programmes with fewer or no assistants, and some accounts were given of steps being taken here. It was suggested that some use could be made of foreign language assistants from local schools, though here again a major organizational effort is required if any success is to be achieved.

Attention was drawn to the dangers inherent in 'getting by' without language assistants; the erroneous impression could be given to outsiders that language assistants are not really necessary anyway, which might then affect those departments who make effective use of their assistants, and whose teaching programmes would suffer irreparable damage without them. A further negative effect of cutting back on the number of assistants could be that it would become more difficult for the British to obtain assistantships abroad.

The discussion closed with a consideration of the ideal length of service for a language assistant, and whether benefits would accrue from employing the same assistant for longer than two years; opinions were divided, and no conclusions reached.

Workshop 16

THE 'EXPRESSION SPONTANEE' METHODOLOGY AS USED AT THE 'CENTRE D'EXPRESSION SPONTANEE, DRAMATIQUE ET LINGUISTIQUE', PARIS

Chairperson and Rapporteur: Mr Colin Henderson (CIT Alcatel)

Mr C Henderson had come into contact with this method by teaching in a language unit within a firm (CIT Alcatel) in France where people very often have to learn English rapidly. Sometimes a crash course will be used in the firm by people from CESDL specially drafted in to break down employee's inhibitions before they go on to do further language learning.

This method is not entirely new and was originally developed for native speakers of their own language who may have had certain hearing problems.

The student is asked to record his/her voice in which an audio loop from mouth to ear is modified to remove certain frequencies so that the voice is heard in a slightly different way. (This would possibly have applications for the deaf.) It has been shown that this can have ideal applications for second-language learners, particularly beginners.

Mr Henderson, after giving his exposé, showed a videotape. In order to use this method, comfortable conditions are necessary involving the use of a relatively small room for seven to eight people, at least one or possibly two teachers and a director. The students sit cross-legged on the floor and are supplied with masks. The teacher also wears a mask and talks spontaneously to the student about any subject. This sequence lasts for about 20 seconds or possibly slightly longer. There will be several repetitions of this particular sequence until it is sensed that the student can take up and repeat what he/she has heard and enter into the empathy between student and teacher. There is a sequence of masks, i.e. once the student begins to speak, the mask is reduced to a half mask and later the teacher will begin a dialogue, by which time the student can see. This process continues until a third person is brought in, this being another teacher. The optimum time for this is something like 13 minutes.

The method is obviously very expensive in teacher time, requiring, perhaps, blocking of up to 4 hours per morning 5 days a week with the course lasting 4/5 weeks, but may have applications for university teaching at undergraduate level.

Workshop 17

RESOURCES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING: A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

Chairperson and Rapporteur: Dr David Bickerton , University of Glasgow

This workshop concentrated on some of the factors which must be taken into account by language departments/centres when involved in the task of acquiring new hardware or updating existing equipment so as to assist language learning.

The Chairman gave an account of his personal experiences, namely of the difficulties/pitfalls encountered over the last two years in designing a new language centre at Glasgow University. Owing to the brevity of the session, the question and answer sequence had to be severely curtailed, but the workshop proved to be most useful and highlighted some important points.

Requisition of hardware should be inextricably linked to methodology. Because of the constant state of change in approach, it is absolutely essential when planning a new language centre that a built-in provision be made for flexibility, both in accommodation and installation. This is owing to the fact that, in days of financial stringency, constant renewal of expensive equipment owing to obsolescence would not be looked upon with favourable

eyes by the higher authorities. It was suggested that planning should be for change, and seven to ten years hence seems a sensible time-span. In order to put the situation into perspective, Dr Bickerton mentioned that some 250 microcomputer systems were currently available on the market and that the demand for traditional language laboratories was declining in this country. The dangers of architect/technical expert-led designs as opposed to academically informed ones were outlined.

Having visited some 25 Higher Education Establishments in Great Britain on several fact-finding missions in the area of hardware employed, together with the help of information given by comparable institutions in France, Belgium and Holland, Dr. Bickerton had reached six general conclusions:

1. In Great Britain of late there was more coherence in the overall approach to hardware, since close collaboration takes place between those responsible for language centres.

2. Institutions whose facilities were 'run down' should, whenever possible, put forward concrete proposals with definite aims in mind when seeking monies for provision of hardware/installations.

3. With some notable exceptions, there was a general lack of purpose-built facilities.

4. Frequently, existing facilities were under-employed and in some cases there was over-provision of equipment such as audio-recorders. There were often housed in accommodation which was too large (e.g. laboratories with too many booths) and were consequently not flexible enough and therefore not fully used/exploited.

5. There still exists a degree of caution about video and computing equipment. Video cameras and VTR sets are not particularly difficult to handle and are perhaps £ for £ a better investment than traditional monolithic language laboratories.

6. There are now available a whole range of audio systems from completely closed to completely open plan. 1984, therefore, will mark the turning point for convergent technology, i.e. the integration of the microchip-based equipment. Microprocessors are coming down in price and gaining in their memory capacities. Satellite TV is now a reality and cable TV on a massive scale is just around the corner.

The workshop discussed these and other topics. The following points were raised and opinions expressed: 1. Methodology must precede hardware. 2. We must plan for change. 3. Automated systems provide useful statistics and reduce the need for human supervision. 4. We should seriously consider equipment which can create materials rather than be used for teaching purposes alone. 5. Interactive video - it was pointed out that this requires video discs scanned by lasers which are at present somewhat expensive but provide random access with a scan time of 5 seconds. 6. Has research been

carried out into the advantages of open-plan laboratories? (this question was answered negatively). 7. Regarding the use of live satellite TV, it was pointed out that this was problematic because of timetabling factors which consequently often gave rise to the solution of off-air recording. 8. The possible illegality of copying off-air from abroad was mentioned. This led to the statement that educationalists should press for special concessions and a change in the law.

Workshop 18

THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY HOUR

Chairperson and Rapporteur: Dr Gertrude Aub-Buscher, University of Hull

The question discussed was very direct: The laboratory hour: time well spent or time wasted?

It was noted that at least one distinguished academic institution in Great Britain offers full degree courses in a variety of languages, yet does not have a language laboratory. The lack of such facilities is felt particularly strongly if the course includes a beginners' class. This may mean the institution has to fall back on the laboratory of a neighbouring institution (this arrangement not being convenient even if the institution concerned is nearby). Discussion then explored the powerful arguments as to how to coerce the powers that be into installing such facilities and, in the places where they are available, to persuade more recalcitrant colleagues to make use of them.

Two basic observations arose from the discussion:

1. Technical reliability of the equipment is a precondition for success (especially when the laboratory is situated remotely within a department/institution or in cases where a number of colleagues may be sceptical about its use).

2. The term 'language lab hour' spells danger, as such work is likely to prove unsatisfying both for students and staff if it is confined to a weekly/fortnightly hour tacked on to an otherwise unrelated course. It should be fully integrated in the language work and the student must be given sufficient tuition in using the lab in order to obtain satisfaction from it.

Given these preconditions, time spent in the language lab is indeed time well spent, and this applied to all levels of language teaching. It is more obvious in beginners' classes where the emphasis may be on pronunciation and/or pattern drills. The student is also given the opportunity to check his/her performance which can help to relieve the boredom of these exercises. The same type of exercises may also be fruitful with non-beginners who have gaps in their command of the language. The lab can also be used to train communicative skills in more advanced students (details of these having been discussed at length in other papers/workshops). For some activities individual

work stations in audio rooms might be more appropriate, as they provide a more inviting environment. It was concluded that fully-fledged labs are, however, necessary for those exercises for which close monitoring by the tutor is necessary or desirable.

Workshop 19

FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE ORAL WORK

Chairperson and Rapporteur: Dr David Midgley, University of Cambridge

The purpose of this workshop was to discuss the aims and problems of undergraduate oral work and how adequate provision can be made for it. Other questions considered were whether the task was mainly remedial, and whether the students themselves were always clear about their objectives.

The session opened with an exposé by Mr M Taylor (Bath) on inhibition factors in the inculcation of foreign language skills. He described how, over the last fifteen years, he has attempted to analyse the elements which ought to make up the first year of spoken language. His aim has been to devise a one-hour oral class associated with an 'interspersed' one-hour language laboratory class, and his approach has been the traditional system of limited oral work. Mr Taylor attempted to ask the question: what prevents students from achieving oral fluency in the target language? (French was used as the example).

His basic approach was to reduce this large problem into 'manageable usage', and he presented five interlinked factors for consideration:

i) phonetic inaccuracy (not admitted by most students)
ii) lack of fluency in manipulation of structures (recognised by many students to be a problem where oral work is concerned)
iii) poverty of lexis (the most obvious problem always identified by students)
iv) personality (a difficult factor to improve but can in some cases be developed)
v) opportunity (the more frequent and intense this is, the greater the progress made).

All these considerations have implications for comprehension as well as expression, which Mr Taylor then discussed. He outlined the ways in which he had attempted to rectify these shortcomings, stating that his remedial exercises were intended to encourage a self-critical attitude among students. (The language lab played a major part here). Another basic aim was to train the students' aural rather than visual memory. Where lexis is concerned, students are encouraged to note new expressions which occur and are tested informally on them (a job which may be entrusted to the lecteur/lectrice). They are also encouraged to 'act out' sections of a text to their classmates and generally to adopt an active approach towards the learning of lexical

material by means of rôle-playing and other techniques. The aim of the ML department is to encourage students to spend more time on spoken language work and to provide the material for them to do this (e.g. radio broadcasts, etc). Mr Taylor concluded by asserting that a systematic approach towards spoken language is indispensable. Discussion of this exposé then followed, and Mr Taylor went on to explain the background to French studies at Bath University in more detail.

One participant mentioned that motivation is also a major factor in encouraging students to speak a foreign language, and should be given due consideration when choosing suitable material. There was also some discussion as to what extent ML material should be of an integrated nature in the First Year course, and of the precise role of the lecteur/lectrice in fostering oral fluency among the students.

Mr Taylor was asked to supply further information about the vocabulary-building techniques he used, and stressed that these involved indication from texts of words/phrases to be transferred by the students from their passive to active vocabulary (and not compilation of vocabulary lists).

Finally an assessment of Mr Taylor's stated techniques took place, the principal reservations expressed about them being firstly that the emphasis is placed on written as opposed to oral source material, and secondly the fact that First Year students are being confronted with far more sophisticated material than they have previously encountered in the 6th form.

Workshop Paper

INHIBITION FACTORS IN DEVELOPING CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS: IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT.
Michael Taylor, University of Bath

Some years ago I had the task of creating a First-Year (post 'A' level) course in spoken French, consisting of one taught class per week followed by an integrated unsupervised back-up/preparation language laboratory hour. The provision for oral work in my own degree course had been limited to a weekly conversation session with a native speaker plus the option of an assistantship year - what Roger Hawkins in a recent article[1] has called the 'osmosis' attitude - and I had consequently not had the opportunity of experiencing any more carefully considered or structured approach.

What I have tried to do is to ask the question 'what prevents students from being able to converse fluently in French?' All of our students have this ambition: they tell us so at interview, and we give them the opportunity to demonstrate it, however haltingly, their willingness being one of our criteria for offering them a place on the course. When they begin their studies I ask them also what they feel to be the inhibiting factors, and discuss these with them in an attempt to provide a rationale and a series of sub-targets which are less vague and monolithically daunting than simply 'improving oral

fluency'. Progress towards this goal is extremely difficult for the student at this level to monitor, and I consider it essential to outline the aim, or aims, of each type of activity and to situate it in the context of one or more of these problem areas, to promote a sense of purpose and achievement and, at the same time, to encourage students to move towards a diagnosis of their own needs as a step towards the development of an ever more acute faculty of self-criticism essential for satisfactory development in this as in other areas.

I am going to consider five 'inhibition factors': they are all interlinked, and I have eschewed any sort of jargon in titling them:

1. phonetic inaccuracy
2. lack of fluency in manipulation of structures
3. poverty of lexis
4. personality
5. opportunity

These have implications, to a greater or lesser degree, for comprehension as well as expression; and, of course, the greatest inhibition to the practice of conversational skills is an inability to comprehend one's interlocutor. I am, however, for the moment, concerned primarily with expression.

Phonetic inaccuracy

Most students do not, at the outset, identify this as being a major barrier, and yet a recent survey which I carried out with a group at the end of their First Year course indicated that this was the area in which they felt they had made most progress. It is true that, on arrival, students pronounce reasonably well, and, in some cases, very creditably, but there are still problems. Firstly, they may be inhibited from using an expression if they are unsure of being able to pronounce it properly, but more importantly, many make errors which constitute a serious bar to communication; one has only to hear students reading aloud from a text that one has not seen to be aware of this.

Accordingly, various sections of the course are devoted to exercises mainly directed at the improvement of pronunciation. At the beginning I hear each student (taught in groups of about 15) read a short passage, and comment briefly on one or two of the more predictable points (poor articulation of (y), (e), (r), faulty nasalisation, incorrect stress, particularly in cognates, etc.), and then give them one or two short exercises in the language laboratory based on simple texts read by native speakers. Students hear the text read at normal speed first, and are then presented with an exploded version and asked simply to copy what they have heard in the spaces on the tape. They are then given the printed text to look at, and asked to repeat the exercise. Next, they listen to the recording, comparing their version with the original, noting places where their pronunciation can be heard to be incorrect. They then rework the exercise until they are satisfied with their effort and, finally, abandoning the exploded version, record the passage directly from the printed text. The main aim of the exercise is to develop the vital self-critical

attitude. From this stage on, I ask students to include in each of their laboratory sessions a short spell of reading and appraisal of their performance.

After these initial exercises there is a series of more formal classes on pronunciation, based on the course by Martineau and McGivney[2] stressing the distinctive speech habits of French as well as concentrating on particular problem sounds. Reference is also made to seeming anomalies in pronunciation such as the sounding or non-sounding of final consonants in common words (e.g. (nor)/(syd)). Students become familiar with the I.P.S. symbols representing the sounds used in standard French, so that they can both read passages printed in I.P.S. and transcribe speech into it. Various aspects of pronunciation are practised extensively in the laboratory using the excellent drills which feature in French Pronunciation.

Lack of fluency in manipulating structures

Students recognise that an important inhibiting factor in their oral performance is an inability to use fluently and almost instinctively, in the conversational situation, certain basic structures which would present little difficulty if they were composing written French. These include such elementary things as the problem of finding correct verb-endings and the appropriate inflection of adjectives as well as the order of pronouns, position of negative particles and so on. To provide practice and build up confidence in this area, students are introduced, or re-introduced, to analogy structure drills. These can easily be prepared by the lecturer and the lector, or use can be made of published material such as Walling's French Revision Drills.[3]

The careful and self-critical working of good structure drills can also be extremely beneficial in a couple of less obvious ways. Firstly, the students are provided again with a check on their pronunciation - and most discover that unless this is solidly based in good habits and sustained practice, their actual sounds tend to become less accurate when they are required to think at the same time about the correct application of some grammar point. Secondly, particularly where the stimulus and required response are lengthier, drills can assist in the development of the student's aural memory by requiring him to retain accurately the elements of a sentence which he is required to manipulate. The attempt to develop this memory underlies the procedure for the copying exercises described earlier, where the first effort is made without the printed text, and throughout the course - and this is no easy task as, in most cases, their earlier learning has been largely from the page - students are encouraged to develop the facility for learning the language by ear in order that they may be able to do so with greater ease during their stay in France.

Poverty of Lexis

This is the most obvious problem, and recognised as such by students, and is, of course, not confined to oral expression. The gradual building up of lexis is an arduous task, and the retention of a wide range of words and expressions

depends on constant practice. There is no point in trying to disguise this from students, and it should be constantly emphasised to them that whenever they are asked to consider intensively a passage of language, spoken or written, their aim should be the learning of structures and vocabulary in context. They should take the positive step of noting expressions and be prepared to be tested informally, in various ways, on those that they have recently encountered.

Again, the emphasis is on building up, in the short time the students spend in class, good habits which will stand them in good stead in the long periods when they are on their own. Here the habit is to have an active, acquisitive approach to the language, and the need is to impress upon them that the benefit derived depends directly on how active and concentrated this approach is. Experience proves, with depressing frequency, how often students have 'read' a book or 'listened to' a lecture without really having greatly benefited, linguistically or otherwise.

Happily, there is now no real shortage of authentic oral texts, and evidence of ever-increasing ingenuity in the way in which they are exploited. Firstly, of course, such texts present exercises in comprehension, but the students should always be made aware of the need, and given the stimulus, to convert passive to active vocabulary. Some of the exercises which have been used to encourage real concentration on the text and subsequent language acquisition are: questions on the text; vocabulary search; discussion of the text, moving towards the use of its lexis in a wider or slightly different context; verbatim recall of certain passages; transcription; preparation of exposés of sections of a text by individual students for presentation to the group; rôle playing.

The arrival of Le français en faculté audio course[4] has proved an enormous boon; its imaginative choice of texts and variety of exercises provides ideal back-up material in these areas for language laboratory work, and students using these units thoughtfully and conscientiously can also profit considerably in terms of increased fluency in use of structures and accuracy in pronunciation.

Personality

To be realistic, there is not a great deal that can be done to persuade students who are really shy to participate in oral work, and these should really be discouraged from embarking on a course where this figures large, either by their careers advisors or at the interview stage. There are, however, a considerable number who choose a course of this type because their interest genuinely is in the development of communication skills, but who lack confidence when they find themselves suddenly in a class with others who are more ready to speak up and have had more experience in doing so. Their reticence often provides the main problem for lectors taking first-year groups. It should be possible for us, in the early months, to encourage such students and to build their confidence. The general ambience of the course and of the Department are of considerable importance, with the emphasis being placed as much as possible on student participation, not only

in language classes but also in tutorial and seminar follow-ups to lectures on literature, institutions or whatever constitutes the other elements of the course. As far as the Spoken Language class is concerned, it should be possible to create a friendly and not over-competitive atmosphere, expressing an appreciation of the difficulties which some participants may be experiencing by reason of their different backgrounds with regard to language learning and practice. At the same time they should all be obliged to contribute, but, in the early stages at least, given the opportunity to prepare in advance material on which they are to speak.

The language laboratory is, in my opinion, a great help in building the confidence of diffident students for three main reasons. In the first place, they can work and make their mistakes in private, and can repeat an exercise until they feel that they have mastered it, or part of it. Secondly, in the course of an hour, they can be required to utter many times more sentences than they would have the opportunity to speak in a class or even in a small lector group. Finally, it is possible to set a definable and achievable target for each session, the attainment of which should provide satisfaction and increase confidence.

Opportunity

It is almost axiomatic that the more frequent and regular the opportunity and the more intensely it is seized, the greater will be the progress made in command of the spoken language. This opportunity varies greatly among students during their secondary education. A recent survey of two classes of my first-year students revealed that two-fifths of them had had no opportunity of speaking French in France during their 'A' level studies. The large majority had, during this time, had regular oral French classes, but only one sixth had regularly used the language laboratory. The implication of this final, rather disappointing, statistic is that an effort is required on our part to 'sell' the laboratory to them as a most valuable aid to learning and consolidating knowledge.

In language departments we need to maximise the opportunities for students to speak and to listen, as actively as possible, to the languages we are teaching, within the framework of a Spoken Language course, such as I have outlined, in the invaluable lector hour, in the language laboratory and elsewhere, by providing lectures in the language, access to films and broadcasts and a well-stocked tape library. If students are to be encouraged to devote to this activity a fair proportion of their out-of-class time, for which there is considerable competition both from the other demands of their course as a whole and from the other activities associated with student life, the oral/aural side must be seen not only to carry esteem within the course but also to be fully reflected in its assessment scheme.

Most students during their course spend a protracted period in the country whose language they are studying, and most teachers are convinced of the critical importance of this period in the acquisition of fluency in the spoken language and will strive to ensure that it remains an integral part of their

courses in spite of the difficulties of organisation which never seem to decrease. I would end, however, by endorsing wholeheartedly these words from Dr Hawkins's article. Writing of the period abroad, he observes that while some students return with an excellent command of the language, others, in this respect, disappoint both themselves and their teachers. He concludes:

> The fault lies with what might be called the 'osmosis' attitude to acquisition during the period abroad. Being there is enough; language and culture will, in some mysterious way, seep through the pores. Much of the psychological evidence, however, suggests that learning takes place not through simple exposure to the material to be learned, but through active attempts at encoding the material. I suspect that many students, when they go abroad, are misled by the osmosis attitude, and do not do as much active work on improving their linguistic competence as they could. This implies that university language departments could do more to train students to be active in their approach to language learning during the period abroad.[5]

NOTES

1. HAWKINS, R: 'Language Learning at University: The Importance of Certain Psychological Constraints' in Modern Languages LXIV/3, 1983, pp 170-177.

2. MARTINEAU, R and MCGIVNEY, J: French Pronunciation, Oxford University Press, 1973.

3. WALLING, J J: French Revision Drills, London; Interlang, 1968.

4. DEVEREUX, J, FARRINGTON, B, and RICHARDSON, C: Le français en faculté audio course, (SUFLRP); London; Hodder & Stoughton, 1980.

5. HAWKINS, ibid, p 176.

Workshop 20

THE YEAR ABROAD AND ORAL COMPETENCE

Chairman: Professor Frank Willis, University of Bradford

Rapporteur: Dr John Henderson, University of Bradford

The workshop noted that many people have strong, even dogmatic, views on this topic, though they are generally subjective and impressionistic. Surprisingly, there is little hard evidence available on the gain in oral competence during the year abroad, though the Bradford survey[1] did measure

gains in (inter alia) oral skills in relation to different types of placement. The workshop applauded the initiative to evaluate the assistantship year, funded by DES through the Central Bureau and being conducted by Mr Dyson, of the University of Oxford Language Teaching Centre, who would welcome cooperation.

The workshop identified a number of factors which may influence oral competence, positively or negatively, including:

1. the student himself or herself, i.e. personality
2. motivation, including that imposed by the situation, e.g. being obliged to use the language for everyday, practical purposes
3. the degree of isolation from other English speakers
4. exposure to a broad spectrum of the host society, not just other students
5. the timing of the year abroad, allowing for adequate linguistic preparation.

We also considered the different types of placement, as follows:

A attendance at a general course for foreign students;
B attendance at a tailor-made course for a group of students, possibly in connection with an exchange scheme;
C attendance at a normal lecture course for local students;
D a work placement, in employment in industry, commerce or an international organisation;
E employment as an English language assistant in a school.

We discussed the pros and cons of each placement type in the light of the factors listed. Type A, though offering systematic instruction at an appropriate level, scores poorly on factors 3 and 4; type B has similar drawbacks; and in placements of type C, while it is possible, though not easy, to join the local student community, there is a danger of anonymity, of remaining in a student ghetto with little supervision, and of the academic work being largely receptive. We concluded that placements of type D and E are probably the most favourable for oral improvement, provided always that suitable students are selected. A job in industry needs personal qualities of initiative and adaptability; and not all students are equally suited to EFL teaching.

Our other main conclusion was that the single most important factor by far is probably the first mentioned, i.e. the student's own personal qualities and attitudes.

1. WILLIS, F M, Residence Abroad and the Student of Modern Languages, University of Bradford Modern Languages Centre, 1977.

Workshop Paper

THE ASSISTANTSHIP EVALUATION PROJECT - AN INTERIM REPORT

Peter Dyson, University of Oxford, Language Teaching Centre

In an article in the Times Educational Supplement (28.10.83), Paddy Carpenter, Deputy Director of the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, pointed out that while other European countries have been increasing the number of language assistants they take, Britain has dramatically reduced its intake because of cut-backs by Local Education Authorities. In a paper entitled 'The Future of the Foreign Language Assistants Schemes' issued by the Department of Education and Science in January 1982, and sent out by the University Grants Committee a month later, along with a questionnaire about the value of Assistants places abroad to language teaching Departments in universities and polytechnics, the following table gives evidence of this reduction:

Assistant places offered in England and Wales and available abroad to English and Welsh Assistants

	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77
Places in England and Wales	3,230	3,430	3,800	3,990	3,710	3,230
Places abroad	1,450	1,420	1,610	1,740	1,830	1,890
	77-78	78-79	79-80	80-81	81-82	
Places in England and Wales	2,370	2,680	2,790	2,430	1,970	
Places abroad	1,970	1,980	2,050	2,170	2,250	

While the reduction in places offered to foreign assistants has been dramatic, there has been a steady growth in the number of British assistants going abroad. It is becoming increasingly difficult to place applicants, since the scheme is reciprocal. In 1983 six hundred 'priority' candidates failed to get posts.

The effects of all this are twofold. Firstly, it leads to a reduction in the quality of foreign language teaching in classrooms at home. Many pupils are now deprived of contact with a native speaker. Secondly, our undergraduates are losing the advantages of the year abroad as Assistants. These advantages are assumed to be improved linguistic competence, as well as general educational benefits. There is also another 'feedback' effect into our educational system in that the supply of language teachers who have the indispensible qualification of having spent a year in the country whose language they hope to teach is being threatened.

The Cockerill report[1] describes the economies of Local Authorities in reducing the number of foreign Assistants they take as 'regrettable' and

'shortsighted' adding that the matter is at present under scrutiny by the Department of Education and Science. The UGC questionnaire mentioned above is part of this scrutiny, as is an enquiry into the attitudes of the Local Authorities themselves. The project described here will, it is hoped, produce 'more hard evidence', as Paddy Carpenter put it in his article.

The project started in the summer of 1982 when the present writer was invited by the Deputy Director of the Central Bureau to suggest a scheme by which linguistic progress during the year abroad could be measured. The small committee (consisting of representatives of the DES and the Central Bureau) which determined the scope of the project asked that it should concentrate on measuring progress in the oral skills as measured by a series of tests before and after the year abroad. The committee suggested that a start be made with French in 1983, followed by German and French in 1984. The re-tests would be administered in 1984 and 1985 respectively.

A team was set up to devise tests in French, and started work in September 1983. Those participating were the present writer as project director, Geoffrey Hare (Bradford), Peter Green (York), Penny Sewell (Birkbeck College) and Jim Simpson (University of East Anglia). The aim was to produce a series of tests of listening and speaking which could be administered in a language laboratory to groups of students without the intervention of an 'examiner' and would be susceptible to reliable marking. An attempt was made to devise test situations in which the language used was of the type in which students could be expected to show increased competence as a result of the year abroad.

The **listening tests,** which lasted just under an hour, were as follows:

Tests 1 and 2. Two short items from French radio news bulletins (one about the capture of a bear by Paris firemen, the other about a storm in the south of France). After each item students were asked to write answers in French to questions in their answer sheets.

Test 3. An interview with a French working mother about problems of looking after her children while she was out at work. The passage was played in five sections with a pause after each for students to answer in French questions in their answer sheets.

Test 4. Two sets of publicity material from French radio. The first set consisted of public announcements about which students were to write answers in English. The second consisted of commercial adverts. Students were asked to say in English what was being promoted and then to give in French the slogan or selling point that was being stressed.

Test 5. A transcription exercise of a short monologue by a French theatre technician talking about the final performance by a famous actress. Here students had control of their cassette and were able to stop the tape and replay as often as time allowed. They wrote the transcription in their answer books.

Tests 1 - 4 were played over the students' headphones from a master tape. In tests 1 - 3 a bleep on the tape indicated stopping points for timing purposes. Test 4 was self-timing,

The **speaking tests** lasted 45 minutes:

Test 1. Four dialogues in French in which the students played one of the roles. The scripts indicated in English what they had to say, the other speaker's part being printed in French and appearing on the tape. The students spoke their part in the gaps; they were not able to stop their tapes.

Test 2. Ten 'situations' each presented in French over the phones. As each was announced, the tapes were started from the console and ran for 30 seconds. The students were told that they could talk as long as the tape was running.

Test 3. An 'interview' administered by the tape. The topic was how the students had settled in to university/college life in their first year. The tape prompted them with four questions and in the two-minute space after each they were asked to say as much as possible.

At the end of the tests the tapes were collected for marking in due course.

The tests were administered in June/July 1983 to the following sample of students:

University College Cardiff	7	Royal Holloway College	11
UMIST	20	Bath University	5
UCNW Bangor	7	University of East Anglia	15
Oxford University	51	Nottingham University	12
Oxford Poly	33	Wolverhampton Poly	13

At the time of administration not all students knew how they would be spending the year abroad: all would be in a French-speaking country and it is hoped that at least 100 will in fact be Assistants. The remainder would be spending the year at university abroad. It may be possible to compare the linguistic competence of the two groups. Each student had a coded number to identify answer sheet and tape of the speaking tests. The material has now been stored and will not be marked until after the re-test in autumn 1984. Markers will not know whether a student has or has not been abroad. The answer sheets for the listening tests will be double marked. The speaking tests will be marked on impression by a team of three markers, the mark given being an aggregate of the three. The statistical adviser to the project is William Eplett, tutor in mathematics at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and the University's lecturer in Mathematical Statistics.

It is hoped that besides providing information about the year abroad in terms of linguistic competence (and possibly also concerning the relative effectiveness in this area of the Assistantship compared with the placement at a university) the project will provide useful information about the large-

scale testing of oral competence at degree level: test design, group testing and reliable yet economical marking techniques.

NOTE 1: Report of the Review of Functions of the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges. COCKERILL, G F, October 1982.

Workshop 21

ASSESSMENT : THE FINAL YEAR ORAL EXAMINATION

Chairperson: Dr Elizabeth Lillie, University of Ulster

Rapporteur: Dr John Roach, University of Aberdeen

This workshop asked three questions:

What is the aim of the final year oral tests? What forms would seem to be most suited to achieve the aims? Are we satisfied with the present situation?

The session began with a review of the present system of assessment, and it was stated that this is the most subjective area of ML assessment as a whole. The reliability of oral examinations was questioned, although not so much as the validity of the present examination set-up there was some doubt whether the quality of accent and even the quantity of grammatical errors made by the student can be reliably and objectively assessed.

Mention was then made of innovatory communication skills examinations, which substitute for the traditional essay and oral exam components. Such examinations entail the conduct of the tests by two members of staff, one French and one English. The purpose of the latter is to ask, towards the end of the test, what his colleague has just said and then make the student interpret his answer back to the French examiner. Such an examination enables assessment to be made under four headings corresponding to the four chief skill factors sought: quality of comprehension, ability to 'complete the task' by relying on productive skills, range of structure and accuracy of response and fluency of response.

In devising such tests, materials with a built-in level of difficulty can be used to assist the examiner to 'grade' students according to the quality of response.

Several participants described the role of interpreting skills in their own institution's final oral examination, and how students are graded. Discussion then moved on to the question of how to devise suitable materials for testing students at the end of their course and at what point their preparation for the final oral examination should being. Two important distinctions were made

during this part of the discussion: that between continuous work evaluation and final assessment techniques, and that between coherence of content and its oral presentation when assessing a student's performance.[1]

Some participants took the view that they would like to have more time to assess students' oral performance and compare it with their written work. Where creation of suitable testing material was concerned, there was some concern expressed for devising sentences/utterances with appropriate length for final-year students. It was agreed that those students who had been taught interpreting during their undergraduate course were usually capable of coping with more wordy chunks of material than those who lacked such training.[2]

The session concluded with a brief discussion of the question of weighting of oral work within the total final mark awarded. No firm conclusions about this were reached, but it was pointed out that the length of the oral examination and the percentage marks devoted to it are not in proportion to the length of the other examination components and their respective marking. Many participants felt this to be unimportant in any case.

NOTES

(1) One participant suggested that diversity of content is often an integral part of oral skill.

(2) It was, however, pointed out that it is every bit as important in assessment to evaluate aural comprehension as to gauge interpreting skills.

Workshops 22 and 23

TEACHING AND TESTING IN THE ADVANCED LANGUAGE TEACHING LABORATORY

Chairperson: Mr Brian Farrington, University of Aberdeen

Rapporteur: Mr John Carter, Oxford

The Chairman began by asking participants to describe their experience in using the above facility. Not all those present had previous experience. Those who had experience often used laboratories either for aural comprehension purposes (some people described very diversified and original exercises which they had devised) or to train phonetic skills, especially at beginners level. Amongst the types of material used were radio broadcasts (often with a political/topical slant) and extracts from plays etc. In many institutions represented laboratories were used as self-study facilities for students as well as teaching rooms. In a lot of cases it was admitted that such facilities had a limited usage, but the assistant(e) would often play a rôle in devising suitable auditory material. In certain departments

laboratories were used especially to teach ab initio courses (e.g. Italian), but in several cases they were not used for testing purposes.

Problems in the use of laboratories included the choice of optimum text length in aural comprehension to avoid the risk of boredom and, for the same reason, varying activities suitably within the space of a given active laboratory session.

The Chairman asked how much language laboratories can be used as suggested by the manufacturers (i.e. with use of the teaching console). Most participants were of the view that the person at the console is useful (particularly in beginners' classes). However, not all those present were in favour of using lecteurs in the language laboratory for a number of reasons:

1. he/she may be 'too precious an article' to be used together with a tape;
2. it might not be desirable that the correcting voice should be a native one (most participants were in favour of this, however);
3. it could be that the average lecteur is not adequately trained to teach his own language (he may be both untrained and undermotivated).

The Chairman then moved on to discuss the forms of testing which language lab facilities make available, and mention was made of the possible difficulties caused by technical problems in final examinations. Few participants had actual experience of this form of testing and, where used, it was normally in the form of an 'exploded tape' with gaps for student response.

It was explained that the conference interpreting laboratories at Bradford had been designed in such a way as to facilitate testing as well as a range of teaching and conference functions. These rooms were used for Fourth Year and Postgraduate interpreting examinations. Mr Griffiths demonstrated the functions of one of the laboratories, played part of a sample examination tape to those present and explained the arrangements for making duplicates of students' tapes during examinations. Other participants then gave accounts of their own testing methods, and many were sympathetic to the idea of continuous assessment where testing methods are concerned.

The discussion terminated with a short debate on the question of copyright as appertaining to foreign language broadcasts, and the desirability of having effective noise insulation in any language laboratory system.

Workshop 23

ORAL COMPETENCE AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF LINGUISTS

Chairperson: Mr Donald Marsden, Civil Service Commission

Rapporteur: Miss Janet Altman, Heriot-Watt University

The group comprised representatives of major employers of graduate linguists, one in the public and the other in the private sector, and teachers at institutions offering vocationally-based courses.

The chairman opened the session by outlining career openings in the Civil Service Commission.

Firstly, in the case of language graduates he pointed out that the 'modernity' of a candidate's degree course plays no part in determining whether or not he is invited for interview. However, the prototype of the successful candidate is either someone who has completed a 'traditional' first degree, followed by a vocationally orientated postgraduate course, or a Bath/Bradford type graduate. Ministry of Defence Linguist Officers mainly do written translations, but the few who are considered suitable are examined in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, with a view to taking on occasional interpreting assignments. Oral competence is not, however, a requirement for translators in Ministerial Departments.

Secondly, there are those who use languages in an ancillary capacity. These include career diplomats, most of whom have a good command of French, but who are expected, in addition, to master one or more languages during their career, frequently a 'difficult' one such as Arabic, Chinese or Japanese.

An area where oral competence in a foreign language is vital is that of immigration officials and customs officers, although in particularly tricky situations they do hand over to professional interpreters. The languages involved here include those of India and Pakistan. Oral competence alone is considered sufficient in languages such as Mandarin and Cantonese.

Next Miss Picken (Shell UK) informed the group that in her capacity as head of the Shell Translation Division she 'tended to steer clear of people with a really good knowledge of interpreting, because this could lead to frustration'. Their skills were likely to become rusty. Yet interpreting assignments do occasionally arise, and these will be serviced by in-house linguists wherever possible. The Russian section is a special case. Oral competence is positively sought after here, since ad hoc interpreters are frequently needed for a few days at a time to accompany Soviet visitors. Translators generally are encouraged to keep up their oral competence, since this is considered useful when dealing with texts of a more colloquial nature on subjects like marketing or public relations.

In a brief discussion the workshop sought to investigate why British industry has been so slow to recognise the value of language skills in graduates, although this realisation is dawning now. The group also wondered how private industry be could be encouraged to change its attitudes. At present the change seems to be spreading very much by word of mouth, and, strangely, only in large and small-sized companies. Medium ones seem harder to reach. The value of joint honours courses such as business studies or textile marketing with a foreign language was stressed. The vocational courses are now more popular than ever, these being, precisely, the ones which concentrate on oral and aural competence.

Workshop 24

FIELD RECORDING OF LANGUAGE MATERIAL

Chairperson and Rapporteur: Dr Geoffrey Hare, Bradford

This workshop consisted of a paper read to a large group of interested would-be practitioners by Anthony Barley, the BBC Radio Leeds Education Officer, dealing with techniques and pitfalls of recording language materials abroad for pedagogical purposes (this being based on his experience of developing material for BBC language courses).

He distinguished between two types of recorded speech: firstly the longer type of interview for features on the life of the foreign country (for Sixth Form/Undergraduate use), and secondly material selected on different criteria for structured courses of language instruction at lower levels. In either case, very careful planning of topics was essential. Points to be borne in mind when selecting potential interviewees were whether a formal/informal style was required, and whether the view of an authority or a lay person was sought.

The necessary pre-interview should not be overdone and so exhaust the spontaneity of the real interview. Also very important in an interviewee were clarity of voice and recording quality, willingness to comply with instructions, and the interviewer's need to guide without destroying spontaneity and warmth of personality on the part of the speaker. Features to avoid in speakers being recorded were those who prefer to read prepared material, verbosity (i.e. long sentences or long stretches of speech difficult to edit), interview noise (i.e. encouraging grunts), and musical background noise which created further editing and continuity difficulties.

Questions concentrated mainly on costs and authenticity (i.e. if an interview is 'set up' and heavily edited, is it ultimately authentic?). Another question raised was whether authenticity was necessary if models of structure were needed for certain courses. It was also asked whether the near-exclusive use of the interview situation does not limit the range of the communicative functions available.

Where costs were concerned, the enormous expense of (a) TV/radio materials themselves and (b) acquiring them through BBC Enterprises were noted, as were the restrictions on copying insisted upon by the authors/technicians/producers holding the rights to these materials. It was felt that all of this might encourage much more in-house production of materials in the future (i.e. those recorded on field trips as described by Mr. Barley). Universities now have the technical facilities both to produce handbooks, tapes, etc. and to distribute them without recourse to the usual commercial publishers. This would enable academics to have greater freedom from restrictive practices and to 'decontrol' copying rights. However, technical expertise is crucial here and training may be necessary. Mr Barley himself offered to contribute to further training workshops in the future.

Part three

FORUM

FORUM

The final session of the conference was organised as a forum which began with an address by Mr Alan Hornsey of the University of London Institute of Education. This was followed by a question and answer session under the chairmanship of Professor R B Tilford (Bradford). The Panel members were Professor S B Taylor (St. Andrews), Professor F M Willis (Bradford), Mr A Hornsey (London), Mr B Farrington (Aberdeen), Mr R W W Pollock (Bradford) and Mr C Williams (HMI).

ADDRESS

Alan Hornsey

I shall open the forum by discussing two trinities and several dichotomies, in the hope that by doing so I shall throw some modest light on the issues which have preoccupied the conference.

Would you try to imagine first of all a classroom in a comprehensive school somewhere in Great Britain, and in it a foreign-language teacher facing a group of about fifteen first year sixth-formers. The number is perhaps too high to be characteristic, but imagine it nevertheless. The teacher holds up a picture taken from a newspaper and enlarged. It shows Buckingham Palace. It appeared in the paper on the day that the Queen had just returned from a tour of some far-flung part of her domains; it is in the middle of winter, water is streaming down the walls of the palace, a long line of milk-bottles stretches from the main door almost to the gates where the guards are, there is a pile of newspapers about six feet deep and all the lights are on. The teacher had recognised that a lot of language was trying to get out of this picture. There are no words on it, but it clearly offers a context and pretext for talking about matters like 'Qu'est-ce qu'elle a oublié de faire?' 'Qu'est-ce qu'elle aurait dû faire?' 'Qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire?' etc., in terms of cancelling the papers, cancelling the milk, turning off the electricity and the water, lagging pipes etc. Now let us take a step further. Try to imagine that the teacher is inexperienced, perhaps one of my own students doing her very first lesson at this level, and therefore only a beginner. Instead of starting by teaching - ensuring that the place is recognised, that the objects can be identified in the foreign language -she has started by testing - asking why water is streaming down the walls - and she is met with silence. If she then describes these pupils as tongue-tied, as unable to operate orally in French, then I might have to suggest to her as gently as possible that perhaps she was the one who had tied their tongues. You will realise that I am thinking here of Professor Thody and his tongue-tied students. I cannot prove it to be the case, but I wonder to what extent their tongues were tied by the Professor himself.

My example is intended to illustrate the first of my trinities: teaching, practising, testing. We have been told a great deal about practising and testing the language orally, but we have heard little about initial teaching. How do students get the language in the first place? The question 'Wie hat

die deutsche Offentlichkeit auf Bölls Katharina Blum reagiert?' may well test knowledge of events, and practise the student's ability to use the foreign language to express opinions and make evaluations, but both presuppose that the information has been taught/learnt and the student has been presented with models of how Germans use the appropriate language. Some exercises are essentially, but not exclusively, testing devices - prose translation, for example. Others, like graded question-and-answer work on a piece of documentary data, lend themselves to initial teaching. The distinction is an important one, because much of the unsuccessful oral work at sixth-form and university level is unsuccessful because the tutor, lecturer, lecteur or even professor is testing what has not yet been taught.

The second trinity was referred to earlier this morning: aims, procedures, aids. We seem curiously prone in modern language teaching to reversing this order and allowing aids to determine procedures, and both to exist without any clear aims at all. I suspect that an expression like 'The language laboratory method' was a product of just such a reversal. We are fascinated by the latest technology. Computers are being installed and therefore demanding to be used, ahead of thinking about why we have them, to what purpose, and how they should be used. The first question is not 'Here we have an interpreting studio, what do we do with it?' but 'What do we want to do, and by what means?' Resources like studios, video-recorders, books, even lecturers, would then possibly be used appropriately when they are seen as the means for attaining previously defined objectives.

Now the dichotomies. The history of language teaching has been compared to the swinging of a pendulum with the participants feeling that they must take up a stance pro or contra some prevailing orthodoxy. The orthodoxy in the late nineteenth century appears to have been associated with the direct approach of the Reform school: Widgery, Ripman, Viëtor, Sweet and others. By the nineteen-thirties the pendulum had swung back and approaches stressing grammar and translation prevailed. Interestingly by the sixties in both the USSR (Belyayev) and in England (Harding) writers on language teaching were critical of this extremism, of the tendency to see the issues as black or white, and to take up uncompromising stances. This polarising tendency is very plain in arguments about language teaching today, even at university level: for or against literature, for or against use of the foreign language or the mother tongue as the dominant teaching medium. Such a polarising of the issues is both more simple and more comfortable than identifying, for example, when these areas or procedures have their proper role to play. An example, taken from a different area of language teaching and which you can possibly view more objectively, was the proscription of the written word for up to two years at the beginning of the En Avant course in primary schools. Such a blanket rule avoided the necessity to consider carefully the role of ear and eye, of speaking and receiving, in learning a language in school. Similarly, if we persist in a debate either pro or contra literature, we can too easily lose sight of real issues about understanding a foreign culture or society, we can even at worst fail to distinguish between reading literature and reading about literature, or fail to ask what 'reading literature' means to students whose experience of the foreign language in a

variety of everyday circumstances is seriously deficient - the phenomenon of trying to read between the lines, when the lines themselves can only be painfully decoded.

Such thinking in terms of either/or can even corrupt research. By the mid-seventies a lot of research, some of it very expensive, had been undertaken on language laboratories. One piece of work in Wuppertal, supported by Volkswagon, was typical. Its 'either/or' was either a language laboratory or a teacher, and it looked at effectiveness in those terms. It concluded, like much other research, that at school level the laboratory made little or no difference to results, but that was hardly the point. By looking at effectiveness in terms of either having a language laboratory or a conventional teacher the important question 'What have experienced teachers been able to identify as areas where they need help, and could this machine possibly provide it?' was not adequately posed. The point I am labouring is that the setting-up of polarities - oral or written, active or receptive, machine-centred or teacher-centred - both oversimplifies the problem as well as giving a spurious air of having solved it. Having divided skills into productive and receptive or active and passive (speaking and hearing, for example) it is tempting to ignore interrelationships or even to believe the categories are real. Is comprehension a passive skill? As one listens to a sentence spoken slowly - 'the....standard....rose....suddenly...etc' one has to form hypotheses based on one's knowledge of the language and those have to be discarded or reformed in the light of new evidence. Such an activity is hardly passive. Similarly, in the simple polarity 'prose or no prose' one is apparently freed from considering different kinds of prose activities. It could be said that some learners are hindered by constant translation, but I have argued elsewhere [1] that the exclusion of prose translation from B.Ed. French courses meant that future language teachers were not made to face up to issues which could have given valuable insights into the problems of interference met by their future pupils.

The most modish of the dichotomies in 1984 seems to be based on the works of D H Hymes and S D Krashen. The former has distinguished in a seminal paper [2] between linguistic and communicative competence and despite insistence by linguists like Henry Widdowson that both are essential ingredients of competence, it has become fashionable to talk of 'communicative' language teaching as somehow excluding structural accuracy or indeed any knowledge of grammar. Even in Notional syllabuses Wilkins does not go that far although, despite the author's views, there has even been a tendency to see notional/functional syllabuses as somehow excluding the need to gain command of the linguistic system. Accuracy and fluency have become another either....or. Yet again, to assume that one excludes the other is also a lazy way of avoiding the issue of recognising the insights which a language teacher can gain from structural and situational and notional/functional analyses of what has to be taught. Even Tony Lodge, in his otherwise excellent talk, raised the spectre of fluency versus accuracy. If in fact one asks oneself 'What does it mean to say "he speaks X fluently"?' then one's answer must surely include flow (a not too halting delivery), immediacy (a not too delayed response), appropriacy (both linguistic - e.g.

appropriate tense - and social - e.g. the right level (manger or bouffer as appropriate), and also accuracy since random flouting of linguistic conventions soon leads to incomprehensibility.

In short, I think it would be useful if we could avoid taking up such polarised stances - speakers have even referred to their own institutions as 'progressive' or 'traditional', as though these were meaningful or necessary categories - and attempt to conduct our discussion without such artificial confrontations.

NOTES

1. Vida Hispanica Spring 1978 Vol XXVII 2
2. On Communicative Competence, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971. Incidentally, Hymes' definition is almost the same as Firth's description of 'tact' in The Tongues of Man, Watts, 1937, reprinted as Language and Language Learning, O.U.P., 1964, page 17

DISCUSSION

Mr K Cleary (European Parliament) pointed out that while one should avoid making too much of the distinction between written and oral skills at the undergraduate level, prospective candidates for employment (ie present-day graduates) very often had a sound knowledge of literature but very little awareness either of technical matters or of what is happening in the country whose language they had been studying.

This observation was answered by Professor Taylor, who stated that on many courses a sincere attempt was being made to provide as much cultural information as possible, but he felt that there was certainly a danger of saturating students with this approach to the detriment of other skills. The success of such approaches, he believed, depends very much on the individual student (ie it is difficult to 'force feed' some students with cultural information). He also stressed that the foreign language assistant's own experience was often as limited as that of the British student, and was not, therefore, always very useful in this respect. He also stressed the importance of detailed preparation of students for the year abroad. At the same time he thought it desirable that the students themselves should be as open-minded as possible about this part of their course.

Professor Taylor's answer was commented on by a representative of a 'traditional' university (Nottingham), who felt that it was difficult for universities to decide the extent to which future employers should be taken into account, and pointed out that only a comparatively minute number of students actually go to work in the European Parliament. He felt generally that it was difficult to pinpoint what prospective employers are looking for, and stressed that their demands tend to change with time. Where the quality of graduates was concerned, in his view universities should be seeking to produce graduates with sufficient intellectual flexibility to adapt to

circumstances in the world of employment and, indeed, to be retrained at appropriate stages in their career. The value of vocationally-orientated one-year postgraduate courses was recognised, but it was felt that the virtues of adaptability should not be underestimated.

Mr R Pollock (Bradford) pointed out that, at best, any university could only hope to turn out educated linguists. This led to comments about the way in which schools see universities, especially when attempting to solve the perennial problem of matching applicants with suitable university courses. Professor Taylor indicated that it was often difficult to describe objectively the differences between the approaches to language teaching used in the 'traditional' and in the 'technological' universities. It was further suggested that perhaps the real distinction lay simply between good and bad teaching. Nevertheless, it was pointed out that a good language teacher is often better off in a less traditional institution, where he or she often feels less inhibited in terms of what can be attempted.

The panel was then asked to consider the future, and the audience was reminded that Professor Taylor is Chairman of the National Council for Modern Languages in Higher Education, and that an excellent newsletter had been produced by this body drawing attention to two important documents, to which a response was required shortly - the NAB document and the UGC's Modern Language Strategy for the 1990's. The speaker went on to say that there were three aspects of both these papers which he thought worthy of consideration. Firstly, conditions will favour vocationally-orientated degree courses; secondly, there is likely to be less specialisation in the sixth-form; thirdly, two-year degree courses may well be introduced. He asked to what extent the panel felt these developments might affect what had been discussed in the course of the conference.

Professor Willis expressed a certain amount of sympathy for the responsibilities faced by the UGC; in the face of the government-imposed cuts a remarkably efficient job had been done by that body. It was stressed that the role of universities is important here in so far as it is their responsibility to make comments to all these bodies about policies which affect them. The possible role of the Nuffield Foundation in helping to establish properly-regulated policies was also stressed, and the need expressed for reliable and detailed information and statistics. In respect of the second and third aspects, it was stated that these carried tremendous implications for languages. It was felt that the relationship between schools and universities would have to be improved in the light of the proposals. Attempts were already being made in this connection, with university and polytechnic sixth-form open days. However, adverse factors such as the often dilapidated state of language laboratories in schools was mentioned as a disincentive for pupils choosing to continue to study languages. It was said that the most frequently quoted criterion on the part of schools in recommending pupils to read modern languages at university or polytechnic is all too often simply that of recommendation by members of staff on the basis of their own previous experience; it was also intimated that, in many cases, headteachers had clear preferences for certain universities to the exclusion

of others. In defence of schools, however, it was pointed out that with some 45 universities and 36 polytechnics in the country, it was very difficult for schools to have detailed knowledge of all the courses offered. Nevertheless, acknowledgement was made of the fact that the more 'distinguished' a school is, the more rigid its attitude is likely to be towards establishments in higher education. The original questioner then stated that the real point of his query had been to find out what steps were being taken in response to the proposals he had referred to, such as the proposed cuts which could result in the disappearance of 15 universities or polytechnics. He felt that those institutions which made a firm response would be the ones most likely to survive such cuts. He thought that shorter degree courses would be joint (eg. a language with another subject), and this raised the question of whether at that moment there were more applicants for Joint Honours degrees than for Single Honours.

Mr G Avis (Bradford) sought to clarify the reference made by Mr Hornsey to what he had called 'this matter of false perception'. Mr Hornsey stated that he was worried about such false dichotomies as had emerged, particularly because of the way they shaped views about 'traditional' courses on the one hand and 'new' courses on the other, such as those offered by universities such as Aston, Salford and Bradford. He pointed out that one of the advantages of setting up false dichotomies was tactical - in order to change courses, overcome inertia and effect innovation the case for change was often stated in an extreme way. He also pointed out that it is important for universities to be able to select the content of what they teach. He then moved on to a more specific matter not touched upon previously, namely that when oral/aural skills are emphasised and made the hallmark of one's approach, it should be borne in mind that these skills may not be as lasting in effect as some of the more general ones which universities try to inculcate. Even so, much time and money are spent on improving oral/aural proficiency. A legitimate question, therefore, was whether there is any certainty that this short-term aim is worthwhile, as in the long term such proficiency may well decline.

Discussion then moved to the language teaching in schools, and it was emphasised that it is important to create conditions in which teachers may keep their own knowledge up to the mark. It was stated that very often younger teachers have a greater level of oral proficiency than older ones, since the latter have not always taken steps to renew their acquaintance with the foreign language. Mr R Pollock (Bradford) suggested, however, that this may also be connected with the type of undergraduate course the teacher had done. It was felt that very often it is the more 'traditional' type of university which sends more people into teaching, whereas graduates from courses where oral/aural skills have played a major part tend to choose other careers.

Next came further debate about the purposes of university teaching of would-be linguists. It was questioned whether it was indeed possible to bear future careers in mind, or whether, as Mr Pollock had already suggested, the aim should be to produce educated linguists. This question was then related back to those which had just been discussed - namely, the value of oral/aural skills

and the training (especially in-service training) of language teachers. It was pointed out that those involved in teaching oral/aural skills should remember that the very nature of what they were teaching demanded continuous and continued practice and reinforcement if what had been acquired by the student was not to atrophy very quickly. This consideration has important implications.

The next question concerned interpreting - its role and function in university degree courses. One questioner felt it was both a valuable teaching method and, at the same time, a method for developing personality. He wished to know how courses could be modified to accommodate the activity. Mr B Farrington, who represented an institution where interpreting did not play a major part in the undergraduate course, said that he believed languages did not constitute a career in themselves for most people, and that the professional translator/interpreter was a very unusual animal. However, in his view, a wide range of linguistic skills, including interpreting, was needed for a wide range of other jobs. He then quoted the large number of job advertisements in which mention was made of the need for a working knowledge of one or more languages, stressing the fact, however, that sometimes only a relatively low level of proficiency in translating or interpreting was sought.

The next contributor to the discussion referred to the Manpower Services Commission's 'Pick-up' scheme, a mid-career retraining programme intended to apply right across the board, and, therefore, including languages within its framework. He stressed that full advantage should be taken of this scheme whenever possible to encourage linguists to renew their active skills.

In the closing minutes of the session the view was expressed that there seemed to have been a shift from written to oral/aural skills. The speaker wanted to know firstly why this was so, and, secondly, which of the functions traditionally associated with universities are considered to be valuable today. In answer to this it was pointed out that universities still see their role as serving individuals and their needs. It was also suggested that universities were now trying to counteract the notion that many modern languages graduates are unable to speak their foreign languages satisfactorily. It was stressed that, although modern languages are still being used in all the traditional ways, new applications are opening up every year.

Many questions remained to be put at this stage, but as time did not permit further debate the Chairman wound up the discussion and ended the forum with a vote of thanks to all the participants.

CLOSING ADDRESS

Professor Roger Tilford

University of Bradford

Ladies and Gentlemen, this has been a notable conference for a variety of reasons. The theme of the conference is an important one. As I said in my opening remarks, we didn't know when we planned the conference that the DES consultative paper was about to descend on us. We also didn't know that Nuffield were about to launch an enquiry into languages. But we did know that we were moving into new accommodation and we did know that the former Director of the Modern Languages Centre, Frank Willis, had retired, and we wanted to mark these occasions with a conference. As it happens the timing has been very good, and I hope that the conference will have made some contribution to the debate which is now under way in response to various stimuli, including the consultative paper and the Nuffield enquiry.

We are also very gratified that there are a number of colleagues here from outside the sphere of higher education. This is very important, particularly in these days when central government is tending to take a bigger role in the direction of academic developments. It is also important, even if at first we are inclined to resist it, to meet and talk to those people of influence in languages outside higher education itself. And I'm therefore very gratified that we have with us people from industry, from Shell particularly, from the Department of Education and Science, from the Civil Service Commission, from the European Parliament and other agencies. I hope that when similar academic conferences are run in the future that the organisers will take the trouble, as we did, to let such people know that we are doing something of interest to them. The DES presence here was very important. It may be that some of the things which Mr Richard Bird said in his keynote address were unappetising for many of us. But there is no sense in pretending that such views do not exist, especially when they come from such an influential source. It was a pleasure, I think, for me - and I hope for you - to have him come to us. We must remember that although some of the things he said were difficult for us to stomach, he did say, and I quote, 'I have no hesitation in singing the theme song of this conference that part of the task of language activity in higher education must be the achievement of a high level of skill in oral communication. It is really regrettable,' he went on, 'that anyone ever appeared to denigrate the importance of this capability, let alone set it aside as some distraction, perhaps, from the intellectual rigour which should inform all higher education.' I think that it is very important that we're getting that sort of message and support from government.

Mr Bird did, however, make one point on the provision of languages other than French in the schools with which I should like to take issue. In fairness, however, I must first remind you that he made it quite clear that on this

point he was expressing a purely personal, and not an official, opinion. But to suggest that the survival of languages other than French in the schools, while desirable, was not perhaps all that vital and that what was important was that pupils be given the opportunity to learn one foreign language which might as well be French, is clearly unacceptable. The view that the techniques acquired in learning one language can easily be transferred to the acquisition of others later in life, is reminiscent of the 19th century justification of Latin. There is no cultural, political, economic or educational justification for the domination exercised by French over such languages as German, Russian and Spanish in the schools. School is, as we might say, a formative experience, or, as the sociologists say, an agency of socialisation. With what view of the world do pupils grow up who have attended schools in which the only, or even the first foreign language is always French? The barriers to a redistribution of language teaching in the schools away from French and towards German, Russian and Spanish are administrative, not financial. The recent DES consultative paper itself drew attention to this. Change here is a matter of policy and political will. That is why, so shortly after publication of the DES paper, it was disappointing to hear a senior DES official express such sentiments.

May I touch on something of which I have been sharply aware throughout this conference? The artificial polarisation (it is now artificial, though there was perhaps once a case for some polarisation), the artificial polarisation between 'the traditional course' and 'the modern course', is out of date and fails to take account of changes that have taken place in departments of all kinds. However, we must not, in our tolerance, nowadays, succumb to the temptation of being apologetic for what we do. We have no reason to be apologetic. The view, articulated by one of our plenary session speakers -was he only playing devil's advocate? - that we had to be concerned with practical language skills but that they were a necessary evil, must be rejected. The teaching of oral communication, the analysis of spoken language, are every bit as exciting, challenging, and capable of being approached with academic rigour, as any other concerns in modern languages in higher education. We must try to retain this sense of excitement.

I thank Gordon Doble and Brian Griffiths, my two colleagues who did all the work in organising this conference. And I thank also two of our secretaries, Beth Hartley, who was involved in the early organising of the conference, and my secretary, Sue Horsley, whom many of you met, who was the secretary during the last week and during the conference itself. Their help also has been invaluable. Lastly, let me thank you all for your lively participation in the conference.

Part four

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

Programme

[illegible]

AFTERNOON

Registration

EVENING

Sherry Reception
Conference Dinner
Mr R H Bird, CB — Opening Address
Department of Education & Science

[illegible]

MORNING

Dr Anthony Lodge — Address
University of Aberdeen — What are we doing in modern languages today?

Group discussions

* Address
The place of spoken language in the hierarchy of language skills

AFTERNOON

Prof Sam Taylor — Address
University of St Andrews — Communicative skills and the modern languages degree

* Workshops

1. How modern is the modern languages degree?
2. Aural-oral and aural-written exercises.
3. Audio and video self-study resources.
4. CAL: computer-based self-study and self-testing materials.
5. Satellite TV: Russian and French TV programmes.
6. Oral and written language – the balance.
7. *Ab initio* languages: an under-valued opportunity?
8. Minority languages in the undergraduate course.

EVENING

Exhibition
Demonstrations
Group Meetings

* Please note additional speakers, chairmen of all plenary and group sessions, workshop contributors and rapporteurs will be announced in the documents to be issued shortly before the conference opens. Certain details are subject to change in the light of impending participants' attendance.

[illegible]

MORNING

Richard Pollock — Address
Brian Griffiths — Interpreting in the undergraduate course.
John Henderson
University of Bradford

* Workshops

9. Exploiting video resources: off-air, classroom and studio TV.
10. The computer-based terminology bank.
11. The conference interpreting laboratory.
12. The word-processor and advanced translation work.
13. Language change: keeping track of developments in oral language.
14. Interpreting as a language-learning activity.
15. Human resources: the contribution of the foreign language assistant.
16. The open-plan language teaching space.

AFTERNOON

Dr Robert Crawshaw — Address
University of Lancaster — The oral component in the final degree examination.

* Workshops

17. Resources for language learning: a look at the future.
18. The language laboratory hour – time well spent or time mostly wasted!
19. First year undergraduate oral work.
20. The year abroad and oral competence.
21. Assessment: the final year oral examination.
22. Teaching and testing in the Advanced Language Teaching Laboratory.
23. Oral competence and the employment of graduate linguists
24. Extra-curricular activities (plays, clubs, visits, informal contacts) and their contribution to oral and aural competence.

EVENING

Exhibition
Demonstrations
Group Meetings

[illegible]

MORNING

Gordon Dobie — Address
University of Bradford — Has the language laboratory a role in the undergraduate course?

Alan Hornsey — Forum and closing address.
University of London Institute of Education
Prof. Roger Tilford
University of Bradford
and other speakers to be announced

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APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPANTS

Mr John Adams	Huddersfield Polytechnic
Miss Margaret Allison	University of Bradford
Miss Janet Altman	Heriot-Watt University
Dr Gertrud Aub-Buscher	University of Hull
Mr George Avis	University of Bradford
Mr Anthony Barley	BBC Leeds
Dr Brian Barton	North Staffs Polytechnic
Dr David Bickerton	University of Glasgow
Mr R H Bird	Department of Education and Science
Ms Renée Birks	University of Glasgow
Sqn Ldr Max Bishop	Ministry of Defence
Miss Vivienne Blackburn	HM Inspectorate
Dr Kevin Bruton	University of Salford
Miss Joan Butterworth	Manchester Polytechnic
Andrea Cady	University of Leicester
Mr Brian Cainen	University College Swansea
Mr John Carter	Oxford Polytechnic
Mr Kenneth Cleary	European Parliament
Mr James Coleman	University of Glasgow
Mrs Françoise Convey	Trinity and All Saints' College, Leeds
Mr Patrick Corness	Lanchester Polytechnic
Mr Erik Correwyn	University of Antwerp
Mr Robert Crawshaw	University of Lancaster
Mr Michael Croft	University of Bath
Dr John Cummins	University of Aberdeen
Mlle Dominique Debise	CIT Alcatel, France
Mr Gordon Doble	University of Bradford
Mr Anthony Dyson	University of Oxford
Mr Edward Ellard	North Staffs Polytechnic
Mr Brian Farrington	University of Aberdeen
Ms Jane Fenoulhet	University College London
Mr Paul Flather	Times Higher Education Supplement
Dr Steve Giles	University of Nottingham
Mr B Derek Green	University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Professor John Green	University of Bradford
Mr Brian Griffiths	University of Bradford
Dr Winfried Haag	University of Bradford
Mr Arnold Hadwyn	Bradford Telegraph and Argus
Miss Jane Hanstock	University of Salford
Dr Geoffrey Hare	University of Bradford
Mr Trevor Harris	Leeds Polytechnic
Dr David Hartley	University of Aberdeen
Dr Peter Hasler	University of Glasgow
Dr Owen Heathcote	University of Bradford
Mr Colin Henderson	CIT (Alcatel) France

Dr John Henderson	University of Bradford
Mrs Marie-Anne Hintze	University of York
Mrs Charlotte Hoffman	University of Salford
Mr David Hopkins	Wolverhampton Polytechnic
Mr A Hornsey	University of London, Institute of Education
Mr David Hunniford	University of Buckingham
Mr Ayoob Jadwat	St Andrew's University
Mr Miquel Joan	London Polytechnic
Mr David Jones	Lanchester Polytechnic
Mr Michael Jones	New University of Ulster
Dr Max Peter Kammeyer	Oxford Polytechnic
Mr Hugh Keith	Heriot-Watt University
Mr W R Knight	Bradford Metropolitan Council
Miss Liz Lawrance	Wolverhampton Polytechnic
Mr Anthony Layton	University of Salford
Ms Monique L'Huillier	Brunel University
Dr Elisabeth Lillie	Ulster Polytechnic
Dr Anthony Lodge	University of Aberdeen
Miss Sheila McAlpine	Sunderland Polytechnic
Mr Arthur McCann	Ulster Polytechnic
Mr Derek McCullogh	University of Surrey
Dr Kathleen M McKilligan	University of Keele
Mr Laurent Mabileau	University College, Cardiff
Mr Donald J Marsden	Civil Service Commission
Mr Malcolm Marsh	University of Salford
Mr Cyril Meadows	University of London
Dr David Midgley	University of Cambridge
Mr Kelvin Newberry	Bradford Metropolitan Council
Mrs Edda Ostarhild	Ealing College of Higher Education
Dr Henry Phillips	University of Cambridge
Miss Catriona Picken	Shell UK Administrative Services
Miss Anna Pilch	BBC Leeds
Dr David Place	University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Mr Gottfried Pollhammer	Leeds Polytechnic
Mr Richard Pollock	University of Bradford
Mrs Ulla Renton Kite	Goldsmiths College, University of London
Mr Brian Richardson	University of Leeds
Mr Andrew Riddell	University of Salford
Mr Michael Rider	Brighton Polytechnic
Mrs Joëlle Riley	University of Salford
Dr John Roach	University of Aberdeen
Annie Rouxeville	University of Sheffield
Mrs Sheila Rowell	Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
Dr Gisela Shaw	Bristol Polytechnic
Dr Geraldine Sheridan	National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick
Mr Eric Snape	Middlesex Polytechnic

Miss Jane Straker	University of Salford
Mr Keith Syed	Government Communications Headquarters
Mr Michael Taylor	University of Bath
Professor Samuel Taylor	University of St Andrews
Mr Albert Thayre	University of Bradford
Professor Philip Thody	University of Leeds
Professor Noel Thomas	University of Salford
Professor Roger Tilford	University of Bradford
Dr Hilary Tomlinson	University of Buckingham
Mr Richard Towell	University of Salford
Mr Michael Townson	University of Aston
Mr Roel Vismans	University of Hull
Mr Ian Wallace	University of Dundee
Mr Gordon Wells	Lanchester Polytechnic
Professor John West	University of Bradford
Mr Gareth Williams	University College Swansea
Mr R Cellan Williams	HM Inspectorate
Professor F M Willis	University of Bradford
Ms Marie- Paule Woodley	University of Manchester
Mrs Margaret Young	University of Stirling

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